

## Backing Up Your Data



Expert John Nouveaux will be our May guest speaker talking about and answering all your questions about how to back up your data, why you should, and more.

Invite your friends. Come early.  
This is a meeting not to be missed.

June's meeting will be devoted to member's digital art.  
Discussion on this at May's meeting.  
Photo paper will be distributed to members who will submit work.  
See you there.

Spring has sprung!

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Apple and Windows Users Group



# Sonoma Valley Computer Group

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## BOARD MEETINGS

Usually following General Meeting. Open to all members. Call 935-6690 for further information.

## MEMBERSHIPS

S.V.C.G. Annual Membership: \$20.  
S.V.C.G. Family/Couple membership: \$30 (residing at same address). Membership renewals are due and payable at the beginning of each year.

## GENERAL MEETINGS

S.V.C.G. meets second Saturday of each month at Sonoma Public Library, 755 West Napa Street; hours: 9:30AM to 11AM unless otherwise notified. Meetings free; guests welcome.

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

*Sonoma Valley Computer Group Newsletter* is published monthly by Sonoma Valley Computer Group. **Desktop publishing services donated by: Kathy Aanestad.** Call: (707) 935-6690, email [aanestad@vom.com](mailto:aanestad@vom.com). © 2005, SVCG.

## ONLINE NEWSLETTER:

<http://www.vom.com/svcg/index.html>

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## MAILING ADDRESS:

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## RECYCLE: Donate Used Inkjet and Laser Cartridges

Kathy Aanestad is collecting used inkjet and laser cartridges to recycle. Don't throw yours away. Bring your used cartridges to any meeting. They will be gladly accepted. Thank you.

## SVCG UG Benefits

Benefits to being a member of the Sonoma Valley Computer Group are a summer Adobe Photoshop Elements 2.0 workshop, O'Reilly Press and PeachPit Press/NewRiders Press giving you a 20% or more discount on all their books and software! For more information, please contact Kathy Aanestad at 935-6690 or email at 'aanestad@vom.com'.

Additionally, SVCG belongs to the Apple User Group program whereby members can purchase Apple products at a savings. Contact Kathy Aanestad for user ID and password in order to access their online site. We need members help with finding contacts for PC user group offers so that they can be included in the newsletter postings.

## TIP OF THE MONTH: WORD WORKAROUND

I received a password-protected Microsoft Word document that I needed to edit with Track Changes. I couldn't do so until I turned off protection, but I didn't know the password. Here's how to solve this dilemma.

Open the protected file in Word and

## SVCG Members Aid Library

Fearless leaders from the Sonoma Valley Computer Group are volunteering their time at the Sonoma Regional Library. The Library has six new flat-screen, high-speed, Gateway public-access computers gifted by Friends of the Sonoma Valley Library.

These machines offer access to the Library Catalog, Internet Resources, Microsoft Works, and Super Search Interlibrary Loan. Although the "front-end" screen format looks a little unfamiliar when recalling the old terminals, the advanced search-limiting and sorting capabilities far surpass what was previously available.



Those with questions, as well as those reluctant to try new online command protocols, are invited to ask SVCG volunteers for assistance. Our volunteers hours are 11am Friday morning.

SVCG affiliation has been a significant factor in our ability to continue as a computer club. We are pleased to participate in community affairs such as this.

**Kudos go to Jeanette Woods, Jeanette Barekman, Joan Fabian, Beth Pickering, Elizabeth Palmer and our newest member, Carol Nelson. Thank you for your help.**

save it as a Rich Text Format file. Close the file and open it again. Select Tools: Unprotect Document and notice that the password is no longer required and that the Track Changes commands are now available. Save the file once again as a Word document. —Gabriel Dorado

# DVD-R MEDIA

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Do you have a brand preference for DVD-R media? and/or printable media? If so, what is it and why?

A: I've only used one and that is Memorex printable discs. They are white and print beautifully. I like them better than the silver one that came with the printer. However, that one isn't bad at all.

A: I did extensive research before buying my blanks as my relationship with clients ultimately depends on the quality and reliability of the final product I provide to them - and faulty DVD's would be a big problem for me if my client can't watch them. I found that a lot of brands have different quality ratings based on the manufacturer and even the country in which they are manufactured, which include such factors such as quality of raw materials used in pressing the DVD's as well as the quality control in the manufacturing process. Many 'brand' blanks use the same source manufacturing and have them 'branded' for their individual companies. Some of these sources stand out above others and are often rated based on how few 'coasters' they produced when burned.

Apple has generally been regarded as among the best quality of discs, but they are branded, not printable and very costly. They also don't make their own discs. The Apple discs are manufactured by Hitachi, Maxell, Mitsubishi Chemical, and Pioneer (in the early days). To get printable discs made by any of these manufacturers usually insures quality blanks. Buying them in a 'brick and mortar' store also helps insure that you are not getting 'fakes' - cheap media made by unscrupulous companies and then fake branded and sold online. You take your chances on line. There are good deals to be had but it is best to deal with reputable companies. Even Amazon has unknowingly shuffled fake blank media from bad sources. Do your homework.

Memorex, Fuji, and Imation are branded discs with some printable options and are widely available in many 'brick and mortar stores' These companies also outsource to other manufacturers and have a decent rating. (Good - not great) but available and reasonably priced.

Ultimately, I settled on Verbatim Datalife Plus printable DVD-R. The DVD-R is very widely compatible and Verbatim rates highy - depending on the series of discs. They are available in white and silver and can be pretty costly. Other media houses I have researched also use them and I have been very happy with them. Perhaps in another year or two I will move up to thermal printing or laser image engraving techniques, but for now I am sticking with the Verbatim.

There is a pretty decent website that compiles some of this info if you want to read more. Check out [www.nomorecoasters.com](http://www.nomorecoasters.com) Some of it is pretty technical but informative.

[online discussion group]

# LLI, DPI, PPI DILEMMA

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Q: I shot Camera Raw digital images for an auction catalog, planning to down-sample them to 72 dpi for online display on their website. Then suddenly I was asked to provide digital black and white versions for a newspaper ad. I am not sure what resolution to provide. The info I found was:for newsprint the LPI is 65 - 100. I forget how Linnes per inch relates to dpi (or ppi).

If my memory serves, 150 ppi works for newspaper, 300 ppi for magazine printing at 100%. Can anybody clear it up for me before I work on the files (due tomorrow, of course)?

A: Some people call scanned resolution spi samples per inch and ppi is only screen resolution

A: DPI dots per inch refers to printer output

PPI pixels per inch refers to scanned or screen resolution and digital camera more or less

LPI refers to the halftone separation screens used for printing (the screens turn a continuous tone image like a film photo into a series of large and small dots to replicate a continuous tone)

A: The way I learned it is a 300dpi image at 100% has enough data to be printed up to 150 line screen. Most printers (especially magazines) print 133 line screen.

Newspapers print black and white at 85 line screen, which means a B&W photos should be 170 dpi, but 150 dpi works fine.

So when preparing images for print, if you double the printers line screen requirements, you'll get the proper dpi requirement.

I've never had a problem using this formula.

A: More on the subject of dpi ppi etc

<http://www.scantips.com/calc.html>

A: *Scantips* has a great downloadable book about scanning, everything you always wanted to know, and gives away tons of free info, see scanning 101 and 201 on the home page, plus has this fabulous calculator. Wouldn't have helped with the lpi problem though

SVCG



# CHOOSING BACKUP SOFTWARE

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by Joe Kissell

When is a backup program not a backup program? Some backup programs do not create additive incremental archives of your files, some do not create bootable duplicates, and some do neither!

Unfortunately, because software developers use terms such as “incremental,” “archive,” and “backup” differently, you may think you're getting certain capabilities when you buy a product that later turn out to be missing. Thus it is extremely important that you read the fine print, and understand exactly what it is you're looking for.

**\*\*Duplication Features\*\*** -- Many different applications can create a bootable duplicate. This entails copying all the files (including hidden files) on your hard disk to another volume while preserving Unix ownership, permissions, and symbolic links. In most cases, such applications can also update a duplicate incrementally (rather than recopy every single file each time).

However, you should consider a few other things when looking at a duplication program:

\* Can it create a bootable duplicate directly onto a hard drive (as opposed to an intermediate disk image or optical media)? If you have an extra hard drive available, you'll want this capability.

\* Conversely, can it create a restorable duplicate onto optical media or a disk image? Sometimes this capability is useful, other times not.

\* Can it automatically update the duplicates on a schedule?

\* When updating a duplicate incrementally, can it also delete files that were deleted on the source volume? If not, your duplicate may include extraneous files that you don't want.

\* Does it have any other features you might use, such as file and folder synchronization?

That said, the duplication programs I've tried are more alike than different, so if you're looking for an application to accomplish only this one task, just about any of the duplication programs I list in the ebook should do the trick.

**\*\*Archiving Features\*\*** -- Among applications that provide archiving features, there's a huge range of variation in how they work - and how easy they make it to restore your work later. The fact that an application stores multiple revisions of each backed-up file does not, by itself, make it good for creating archives.

**\*\*Archive Varieties\*\*** -- First, there's an important distinction to

make: true archives versus rotating backups.

In a true archive - that is, an additive incremental archive - every version of every file you designate is saved, but identical files are never duplicated. In a rotating backup, the program creates a complete, separate copy of all your files every day - basically a non-incremental archive. Then, after a certain number of days (specified by the user), the program erases the oldest backup and adds a new one. Rotating backups, because they copy every single file each day, take longer to perform and require much more storage space. If you have room and time to spare, there's nothing wrong with that approach, and it removes the need for a snapshot list, since all the files themselves are there (see 'Snapshots and File Lists,' just ahead). However, because you're erasing files older than a certain date, you're restricting your restoration capability. If you keep, say, five days worth of rotating backups and find you need a file you deleted a week ago, you're out of luck.

A few applications offer the best of both worlds: rotating archives. Like a conventional archive, new files are added to the backup incrementally (without overwriting older versions). However, in order to conserve space, you can opt to erase the oldest versions of selected files at the same time - for example, all versions older than 30 days, or versions copied more than 30 sessions ago.

**\*\*File Format, Compression, and Encryption\*\*** -- To oversimplify somewhat, most software employs one of two basic methods to copy files when performing a backup. One way is to copy each file in a stand-alone Finder-readable format, so that the backed-up files look exactly like the originals. Another way is to copy all the files into a single, larger file (sometimes called an archive file or a backup set). Each approach has advantages and disadvantages.

Finder-format copies can be restored without the use of a backup program - just drag and drop. Some people also feel more secure knowing they can get at their files easily even if their backup software goes south. Of course, the backed-up files will always take up exactly as much space as the originals.

Archive files can be compressed efficiently as they're stored, potentially saving a large amount of hard disk space. They can also be encrypted, so if your backup media is lost or stolen, no one can read your files without knowing your passphrase. And unlike Finder copies, which always take as their owner the user name of the person currently logged in, archive files can preserve original Unix ownership and permissions. Of course, you will need the backup software to restore files, and in some cases you have a slightly higher risk of data loss due to file corruption (since all the data is stored in a single file) - but most backup software has verification mechanisms to compensate for this.

(Note\*\*:\*\* Not all programs that offer compression or encryption copy data into a single archive file. A few can compress or encrypt individual files, such that they can be moved or copied (but not opened) in the Finder. You must still use the backup software to restore them to their original state.)

However, you should also be aware of a third option: disk images. Some backup software, at least when backing up to a hard disk, stores files in a disk image. Like an archive file, a disk image is a single file that contains all your other files - and can optionally be compressed, encrypted, or both. The difference is that you can double-click a disk image, and after supplying the passphrase (if necessary) it will mount on the Desktop as a regular volume - after which you can read and copy files using the Finder. Sounds great, doesn't it? It can be, but keep in mind that in most cases, each incremental archive backup is stored on a separate disk image, so without a snapshot or file list provided by the backup software (see 'Snapshots and File Lists,' just ahead), restoration can be quite involved.

When making a bootable duplicate onto another hard disk, Finder copies are obviously mandatory. For archives, though, I strongly prefer a format that offers both compression and encryption - and in this respect, archive files are generally more elegant and convenient than disk images.

**\*\*Snapshots and File Lists\*\*** -- When it comes time to restore files from an archive, you must be able to locate the versions you want quickly and easily. Some backup programs facilitate such restorations by offering snapshots - lists of all the files on your computer as they existed at the time of each backup, even if they were already present in the archive and therefore not copied during that particular session. Suppose you want to restore all the files on your machine as they existed last Tuesday. Having a list of all the files as they appeared on Tuesday - and an automated way to restore them - can be extremely valuable.

On the other hand, imagine that you want to look back at every version of just one particular file as it existed over the past month. In this case, you don't want to wade through snapshots - you simply want a list (sorted by file name or date - or better yet, searchable) of each version of the file in the archive, from which you can choose just the ones you want. Without either a snapshot or a file list, you'll need to locate each version of the file manually in dated folders. This makes for a long and tedious restoration process.

**\*\*Sources and Destinations\*\*** -- The volume from which you are backing up files is known as the source; the volume to which you are backing them up is known as the destination (or target). Be sure the software you select can accommodate the sources and destinations you wish to use.

All backup programs can copy data from your startup disk. Most can also copy data from other attached hard disks, network volumes (including AppleShare volumes, FTP servers, and iDisks mounted in the Finder). And usually you can select arbitrary folders or files

anywhere on those volumes to be backed up. However, there are exceptions. Qdea's Backup Simplicity, for example, supports only your startup volume.

In most cases, your range of destination options also includes any Finder-mountable volume. (So, theoretically, you could even back up one network volume to a different network volume if you wanted to.) But not always: Babel Company's Impression, for example, cannot copy files directly to a hard disk - though it can create a disk image that resides on a hard disk. On the other hand, at least Impression creates the disk images for you. Most programs require that you manually create the disk image yourself using Disk Utility and mount it in the Finder before you can use it as a backup destination.

A similar issue comes into play with optical media. A backup program can support recordable CDs and DVDs as a destination in either of two senses:

\* You pop a blank disc into your drive, give it a name, and allow it to mount in the Finder (Desktop). The backup software sees the disc as a possible destination like any other volume. After running the backup program, you then return to the Finder to manually burn and eject the disc.

\* The backup program itself asks for blank media when needed, writing to it directly without the intervention of the Finder.

The first way of supporting optical media is trivially easy for software developers to implement, so that is how many backup programs work. But this approach does have some problems. First, it requires much more human intervention - performing manual steps despite the fact that the backup itself runs automatically on a schedule. Second, it eliminates the possibility of multisession recording (the ability to record additional chunks of information on a partially used disc after the initial write session), since the Finder does not include this feature. This is a problem because without multisession capability, you will use a much larger number of discs - increasing not only media cost, but inconvenience. (Note, however, that some applications, including Retrospect, use a packet-writing technique to add data to partially used optical discs. This is even more efficient than multisession support, but it means that only the application used to record the discs can read them later.) Therefore, if you need to record backups onto optical media, I strongly recommend using an application with multisession (or packet-writing) support.

<http://www.dantz.com/>

A related issue is what I'm going to call media spanning. Suppose you have more data than will fit on a single CD or DVD - or even that you have a single file that's too large to fit on a single disc. Some backup programs intelligently manage backups that span multiple discs, prompting you for new media when required during a backup (splitting files if necessary),

and asking for the proper discs when restoring files (rejoining split files). Although the need for media spanning could affect those backing up onto hard drives as well, it's most crucial for those using optical media. Only a few backup programs offer media spanning, and even fewer include both media spanning and multi-session or packet-writing support.

**\*\*Selectors and Exclusions\*\*** -- Selective archive backups (as opposed to full archive backups) do not include every file on your hard disk. But archiving even your entire home folder may be overkill, since it includes things like cache files, which serve no useful purpose in the context of a backup, and digital media files (such as MP3s ripped from your CD collection), which, because they change infrequently, are adequately backed up already if you maintain bootable duplicates of your entire hard disk. So instead of simply selecting one or more folders to archive, you may wish to explicitly include or exclude certain types of files.

Some backup programs include user-definable criteria specifying which files should be included (selectors) or excluded (exclusions) from a particular folder or volume - and a few programs offer both. Depending on the program, these criteria may include file names, sizes, Finder labels, extensions, modification dates, and any number of other factors.

In general, I find exclusions more useful than selectors, though I would not generally consider either an absolute must in a backup program. Your mileage, of course, may vary.

**\*\*Ease of Restoration\*\*** -- No matter how easy it is to back up your hard disk, if your software makes it difficult to restore files, you're going to be unhappy with it. After all, a backup that you can't restore is worthless. Backup programs typically offer one of three main approaches to restoration:

\* Finder restoration: The backup program has no Restore command; to restore files, you drag them manually from the backup volume onto your hard disk. This is fine if you're restoring an entire folder, but if you've done an additive incremental archive, you may have to sort through dozens or hundreds of folders to locate the right versions of each of your files.

\* Reverse backup: In this scheme, the backup program once again does not offer a Restore command, instead expecting that you'll simply swap the source and destination locations and perform your backup again - in reverse. While this may reduce manual effort somewhat, it's still going to be a hassle when restoring versioned files from an archive. And even in the best cases, a reverse backup can be confusing and stressful, because it's easy to get the source and destination mixed up when their contents are so similar.

\* A Restore command: The backup program (usually) keeps track of all the files you backed up during each session, allowing you to copy them back to their proper locations - or another destination of your choice - with a few clicks. In most cases, before starting the restoration, you can choose a subset of the files, or even pick out

one version of a single file if that's all you need. Restore commands and snapshots tend to appear together.

It probably goes without saying that I prefer applications with a Restore command - they make the restoration quicker and easier. Of course, the presence of a Restore feature does not, by itself, mean the process will be easy, but it's a hopeful sign.

**\*\*Restoring a Full Archive as a Bootable Volume\*\*** -- If you choose to perform a full (rather than selective) archive, bear in mind that not all backup software can restore your archive from an arbitrary point to a blank disk in such a way that the resulting volume will be bootable. In order for a restored full archive to be bootable, several things must be true:

\* All files needed for your computer to start up - including a great many hidden files - must be included in the backup and restored afterward.

\* The backup software must preserve Unix ownership, permissions, and symbolic links during both the backup process and the restoration process; doing so requires that you enter an administrator's password.

\* When restoring the files, the destination disk must not contain any extraneous files that could interfere with booting; normally, this implies erasing the disk before restoring the archive.

Most backup software that provides both duplication and archiving features also enables you to restore a full archive as a bootable volume, assuming that you set it up properly. Some programs, however (notably Synchronize Pro X) can restore a bootable volume only from a duplicate, not from an archive. A few applications permit full archives to be restored as bootable volumes, but lack a snapshot feature - meaning you must manually locate and copy a large number of documents to return your disk to the state you wish to recreate.

<http://www.qdea.com/pages/pages-sprox/sprox1.html>

Unfortunately, most backup software does not explicitly state whether or not it can restore a full archive as a bootable volume, and of the programs that do, some are more reliable in this regard than others. This may be a good reason to consider performing selective backups instead; on the other hand, if full archives are important to you, I recommend using Retrospect.

**\*\*Ease of Use\*\*** -- In addition to ease of restoration, an application's overall ease of use is also important. The interface should be self-explanatory - ideally, clear enough that you can figure out how to perform a basic backup and

restoration without ever looking at a manual.

If your backup software is difficult to learn or set up, you're less likely to use it. So you want an application you can configure in an hour or so - not something that takes you an entire day to figure out. You also want your backup software to perform its duties on a schedule with as little interruption to your routine as possible. The best backup software would be completely invisible, working silently behind the scenes until you needed it.

Even so, don't underestimate the importance of good documentation. An extensive, well-written manual can be a godsend when trying to comprehend the minutiae of rotating archives or client-server configuration.

**\*\*Support and Reputation\*\*** -- Some backup software is published by individuals who like to program in their spare time. At the other end of the spectrum, some backup software is published by large corporations with a small army of programmers and a full-time paid technical support staff. Ironically, I've often received better and quicker technical support from individual authors - even those who give away their applications for free - than big companies. On the other hand, if you're entrusting all the data on the computers in your home or small office to a backup application, you may feel more comfortable knowing that a professional staff stands behind the product.

Of special note in this regard is Dantz (now owned by EMC), developers of Retrospect. They charge \$70 to speak to a technical support representative on the phone - a seemingly outrageous fee. However, I've used Dantz technical support more than once, and I believe you get what you pay for. The technicians answer promptly, are highly trained, and continue working with you - even over multiple phone calls - until the problem is solved (without charging you for each call). When I'm terrified that I might have just lost all my data and my software doesn't seem to be functioning correctly, I'm only too happy to pay \$70 for the reassuring voice and advice of an expert who can help me get things working again.

**\*\*Price\*\*** -- The backup software I discuss in the ebook ranges in price from free to \$130. The price does not necessarily correlate to capabilities, but I urge you not to skimp when it comes to backup software just to save a few dollars. After all, time is money. If you lose a day of income because your backup program makes you jump through too many hoops when restoring files, that's likely to be a bigger financial hit than the cost of better software.

[The author's new book.]

**\*\*Take Control of Mac OS X Backups\*\*** -- In 'Take Control of Mac OS X Backups,' I take this information a step further and provide detailed recommendations about which software is best for particular uses, including network backups. I also include an appendix with feature comparisons, pricing, and contact information for about two dozen backup applications. In addition to soft-

ware recommendations, I discuss hardware options, backup strategies, restoration techniques, and more - everything you need to know to set up a reliable and easy-to-use Mac OS X backup system. 'Take Control of Mac OS X Backups,' a 96-page ebook, costs \$10; as always, purchasers are entitled to receive all minor updates free of charge.

<http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol/backup-macosx.html>

[Joe Kissell is a San Francisco-based writer, consultant, and Mac developer who kicked off the Take Control series with the best-selling 'Take Control of Upgrading to Panther,' and has also written two ebooks about Apple Mail. His secret identity is Curator of Interesting Things for the Interesting Thing of the Day Web site.]

## CLUSTER SEARCH ENGINE URLS

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The cluster search engine sites the Beth Pickering presented at our February meeting were: [www.mooter.com](http://www.mooter.com) & [www.kar-too.com](http://www.kar-too.com).

## INTERESTING URLS

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### Engine Ears.

Want to avoid Google-induced eyestrain? A new search engine called Speegle ([www.speegle.co.uk](http://www.speegle.co.uk)) not only displays results as text but also **reads the results aloud** in male or female voices. And if hearing is believing, the Scottish-based ebsite also offers synthesized-speech renditions of articles from nearly two dozen news organizations including the BBC, Reuters and the New York Times.

### Eye Health.

- \* The Food and Drug Administration, [www.fda.gov/cdrh/lasik](http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/lasik)
- \* [www.allaboutvision.com](http://www.allaboutvision.com)
- \* [www.lasikinstitute.org](http://www.lasikinstitute.org)
- \* American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery: [www.ascrs.org](http://www.ascrs.org)
- \* Eye Surgery Education Council: [www.eyesurgeryeducation.com](http://www.eyesurgeryeducation.com)

### Addictions.

- \* Odyssey House: [ww.odysseyhouseinc.org/](http://www.odysseyhouseinc.org/)
- \* Hazelden Treatment Centers: [www.hazelden.org](http://www.hazelden.org)
- \* U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration: [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)
- \* [www.prescriptiondrugaddiction.com](http://www.prescriptiondrugaddiction.com)
- \* [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov)
- \* [www.nida.nih.gov](http://www.nida.nih.gov)

# DVD BURNING

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GoVideo from Costco and other places has a DVD/VHS machine that had both DVD and VHS burning capabilities. Just pop your precious VHS tape into the machine, press a button, and you can burn and archive that VHS tape onto DVD. How cool is that.

Pretty cool - in fact, such an item will be a near term purchase specifically for living room convenience - but let me present some thoughts and lay down a little bit of responsive spec info on this collective thread:

**#1. - analogue to digital transfer** - Two popular methods as mentioned include either a conversion box, such as the canopus system. There are numerous other brands and models available that include different features such as 2-way conversion, to allow a digital process to be recorded back to VHS (or other analogue medium) or even an included TV tuner for watching or recording TV on your Mac or inputting to iMovie, etc. They can be purchased at many retailers or online, and many are of notable reliability. You can expect to pay from \$99 for the lower end, up to \$350 for higher end consumer level - or even \$1500 or many thousands for very high end professional models that are generally used by professional transfer houses.

I use the Formac Studio DV (between \$250 and 300) and have been happy with it, but many others are just as good (imho)

As mentioned, you can also consider using analogue input conversion from a digital camera - and if you want to limit how much money you spend on equipment and yet perhaps invest in a digital videocamera as well - then this might be a sensible purchase.

Some models will be a better buy than others. Typically, the method has been to connect your analog source (VHS) to the input of the camera and RECORD YOUR FOOTAGE ONTO DIGITAL TAPE. Then, you must play back your digital tape into the computer via firewire. This does not cause a loss of quality through the tape transfer as it is a digital transfer, however, as a two-step method, it may NOT be the most convenient. Some recent camera models have eliminated the two-step by implementing 'play through' on the analogue inputs. This allows you to connect your VCR to the camera and connect the camera to the computer and input immediately to iMovie. Very nice .

Some caveats. Not all models that have analogue inputs support 'play through'. Not all digital camcorders are Mac compatible. I have three camcorders - a Canon XL2, Canon Elura 65, and a Sony TRV-480. They all support 'play through' but the Canons can be a little complicated for some folks. (The XL2 features S-video, composite and BNC connections, but unless you are planning on professional videography, don't spend the \$5,000. ) The Elura 65 isn't even Mac compatible at this time. I love this little thing, but don't be misled by finding it at the Apple Store where it can be purchased. Hopefully OS 10.4 will provide compatibil-

ity, but for now, your computer can't read from it.

The Sony, although the cheapest of these three touts it's 'play through' as a feature and consequently makes it an easier process than the Canons. My model is a Digital 8 and also plays older analogue 8's which is specifically what I use it for. NOT ALL MODELS will play the analogue 8's so verify before you buy. The Sony is lower priced and ergonomically clunky - but has great features and does a really nice job (a real consideration for you if you don't mind that Digital 8 will not have as long a consumer shelf life as mini dv)

## **#2. DVD burning**

There are basically three standard formats for consumer DVD's falling into two categories - Pressed and burned.

Pressed DVD's are what you rent at blockbuster and is how Hollywood films are converted. Data is pressed into the disc rather than laser burned. This technique is suitable for large manufacture orders such as Hollywood releases and provides a better and longer lasting quality than burned DVD's.

Burned DVD's are what you get from small-run media houses and from your Mac or PC DVD burner. I won't bore you with the specifics, but suffice it to say that the data is actually burned into the disc as opposed to pressed. This method is becoming more and more prevalent as everyone and their brother is getting into home based media work, but is still not on par with pressed format due to countless factors. OS glitches, software reliability, RAM hiccups, lens dust, and quality of blank medium can generate anywhere from a 5% to 25% coaster burn ratio (making discs that don't work)

When everything is running smoothly, you can get a very good quality DVD that if treated with care could potentially last much longer than VHS and retain its full quality. Early speculation was a shelf life of 75 to 200 years, but they said that about CD's also, and if you follow that technology, you know that this has been significantly rethought. The jury is still out on this one, but word on the street is that Obsessive Compulsive types will plan on transferring up their digital data every 2-5 years.

As mentioned earlier, the newer DVD recording machines are a nice convenience and something to consider. You can connect your input, whether VHS or television, etc. and record directly to disc 'on the fly'. It is fast and convenient. However, there is something to consider about the quality.

By comparison, you should understand that video compression for DVD burning is quite a wide field. For optimal settings on your computer, if you choose 'highest quality' in your DVD app, and set your burn speed to the slowest setting, you will get the best quality and most reliable burn attainable on your computer/burner system.



The 'on the fly' unit is a low quality compression 'quick burn' technique designed specifically for convenience and speed. You WILL get a digital copy of your video, and you WILL be able to watch it as a DVD and it WILL LIKELY last about as long as other standard laser burned DVD's. Although you might not even notice compression differences on your standard NTSC television set in the living room, you might notice it if you view your disc on a computer, a larger digital TV screen, and most likely if you do what they hope and purchase a new high-definition TV in the next couple of years, you might be able to see that as a DVD, it won't be quite as high-quality as you hoped.

If just archiving your favorite movies fading on VHS to watch a few more times, than I think the 'on the fly' unit is a deal. (I'm going to get one to transfer my children's entertainment because my 2-year old has taken to dissecting the VHS tapes.)

If you plan on archiving family memories to DVD for future generations to enjoy, certainly consider the best method you can find.

[Online discussion board]

## TECHNOLOGY IN A TEAPOT KEEPS WATCH ON ELDERLY

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Full story:

[http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/business/technology/2002237518\\_btjapanipot11.html](http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/business/technology/2002237518_btjapanipot11.html)

By Emi Doi  
Knight Ridder Newspapers

TOKYO -- Sliding open a lattice door to his traditional-style wooden home in the old part of Tokyo, Kazuo Kijima greets a visitor warmly. The wooden screens near his entry are decorated with Japanese brush painting, the kind fewer and fewer homes here display.

But more and more Japanese these days are like Kijima: elderly and living alone. Still, Kijima, 83, a widower with no children, does have someone watching out for him via a bit of technology embedded in his kitchen.

His electric kettle, an "i-pot" (for information pot), not only boils water for his instant miso soup and green tea, but it also records the times he pushes a button and dispenses the water. A wireless communication device at the bottom of the i-pot sends a signal to a server. Members of the service can see recent records of i-pot usage

on a Web site. In addition, twice a day the server e-mails the most recent three usage times to a designated recipient.

For Kijima, that recipient is neighbor Tadahiro Murayama. "Once, I didn't use the pot for a day, and I got a phone call from Mr. Murayama," Kijima said. The i-pot, he said, helps him feel he's not alone.

Electronics maker Zojirushi began the service four years ago. The company rents the pot for a \$50 deposit and charges \$30 per month for e-mail and Internet service.

In graying Japan, more than one-third of households have members older than 65, and 4.8 million households are composed of elderly couples. An additional 3.4 million people live alone, according to Ministry of Health Welfare and Labor figures for 2002, the latest ones available.

Increasingly, solitary lives give way to solitary deaths. The nation was alarmed to find that after the great Kobe earthquake in 1995, hundreds of people who lost their families, jobs and houses later died alone in temporary housing. In Tokyo in the past 10 years, the number of unattended deaths among the elderly doubled, reaching nearly 2,000 in 2003, the Tokyo Medical Examiner's Office reported.

Response to tragedy But it was one family's sad story, not the statistics, that spurred the invention of the i-pot. In 1996, Tokyo neighbors found the bodies of a 77-year-old woman and her 41-year-old handicapped son more than 20 days after they died of starvation. According to the woman's journal, she could have asked for help from social-welfare services but chose not to. The contents of her wallet amounted to 28 cents.

The deaths shocked many people, including Hiroyuki Amino, a physician who cares for elderly people. Amino asked electronics maker Zojirushi to create a system to keep an eye on elderly people living alone.

Five years later, Zojirushi, Fujitsu and the telephone giant NTT rolled out the i-pot. It fit perfectly in Japan, where hot water for tea is a regular routine of daily life. And the pot is so simple to use that it doesn't give people a sense of being monitored.

I-pots send reassuring messages to people in North America, Europe and Asia about their relatives in Japan. More than 2,200 families use them.

Long-distance care Keiko Kubovcik of Annandale, Va., read about i-pots in a Japanese magazine and got one because she worried so much about her mother in Japan. Kubovcik would panic every time she called and got no answer. The i-pot messages, she said, give her a "sense of security and comfort."

Her mother, Kaneyo Takahashi, 76, wakes up every day at 6, cleans the bathroom, wipes the kitchen shelves and cleans her

i-pot. When she turns it on, it sends a "good morning" message to Kubovcik.

"Your mom is healthy and alive today," announces Kubovcik's husband, Ronald, when he turns on his computer in the morning in Virginia.

Kubovcik moved to the United States 15 years ago to train as a patent lawyer and ended up settling there."I felt a devastating sense of guilt leaving my mother alone," said Kubovcik, whose father died 10 years ago after suffering a heart attack.

Her mother tried living in the United States for three months, but she spoke no English, found the food too unusual and missed her friends.

Could the i-pot catch on elsewhere? Maybe in a different form: How about the i-fridge?

Ronald Kubovcik thinks it's possible.

Communicating daily in i-pot language has become a comforting part of life, he said. "It's a 'good morning' and 'good night' greeting to us."

## More Interesting URLs

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\*AARP's "Choosing the Right Prescription Drug" at [www.aarp.org/researchRx](http://www.aarp.org/researchRx)

\* Consumer Union's "Best Buy Drugs" at [www.crbestbuydrugs.org](http://www.crbestbuydrugs.org)

\* Oregon's project reports can be read in full at [www.oregonrx.org](http://www.oregonrx.org)

## THE COMPUTER'S SWALLOWED UP GRANDMA

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The computer's swallowed up Grandma  
Yes, honestly, it's true.  
She's pressed 'Control' and 'Enter'  
And disappeared from view.

It's devoured her completely  
the thought just makes me squirm.  
Maybe she's caught a virus  
Or been eaten by a worm.

I've searched through the 'Recycle Bin'  
And files of every kind  
I've even used the internet  
But nothing did I find.

In desperation...I asked Jeeves  
My searches to refine  
The reply from him was Negative.  
Not a thing was found "online"

So if, your 'In Box'  
My Grandma you should see  
Please 'Scan', 'Copy' and 'Paste' her  
In an e-mail back to me.

## Resources to Help with Internet and Email

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[researched by Beth Pickering]

*I'm on the Internet, now what?*  
by Lake, Matthew

*Email*  
by Milner, Annalisa 005.07 Milner

*The Usborne Guide to E-Mail*  
by Wallace, Mark

*E-mail for Dummies*  
by John R. Levine et al 004.69221

*Email for Everyone* 004.67  
Email video cassette 60 min. produced by Denise Nicholson

*The Rough Guide to the Internet*  
by Buckley, Peter 1971- 004.678

*Young@heart: computing for seniors*  
by Furlong, Mars S. 004.02

## DIGITAL ARTSHOW FOR CLUB MEMBERS

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June is the month where SVCG members will show their digitally created 'masterpieces'! Please contact Kathy at [aanestad@vom.com](mailto:aanestad@vom.com) or call 935-6690 regarding your work. Thank you. More info will presented at May's club meeting.



PRESENTS

# Digital Everything

Level: Beginner/Novice  
 Time: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm  
 Cost: \$50.00  
 Location: Burlingame Hall (First Congregational Church)  
 252 West Spain Street Sonoma, California  
 Sign up: [www.reallycoolimages.com](http://www.reallycoolimages.com)

**Saturday, May 21, 2005**

There is still time for you to sign up for professional photographer, Michael Sauer's *Digital Everything* workshop on May 21st here in town. Go to [www.reallycoolimages.com](http://www.reallycoolimages.com). You'll be glad you did!

## THE MISSOURIAN ONLINE EXPERIMENT

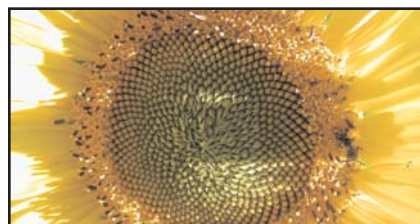
[From club member, Jeff Blum.] Some people in the SVCG may be interested in this experimental online edition of "The Missourian". It's put out by the highly regarded U. of Missouri School of Journalism. They're doing this for 10 weeks, and are interested in feedback. The first edition came out last Sunday. I think it's pretty interesting.

Here's an article about it from "USA Today".

[http://www.usatoday.com/life/columnist/mediamix/2005-02-28-mediainmix\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/life/columnist/mediamix/2005-02-28-mediainmix_x.htm)

And here's the website for the paper.

<http://www.columbiamissourian.com/emprint/>



## Sonoma Valley Computer Group Membership Application/Renewal Form

### New Applicant

Use information below

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Send  \$20 (individual)  \$30 (family) check to:  
 Sonoma Valley Computer Group  
 POB 649  
 El Verano, CA 95433

I give permission to use this info in the club roster which is for members only

### Renewal (expiration date on label)

Use the name and address label

Platform:  Mac  PC  WinNT  
 Operating System:  OS 8x  Win3  Unix  
 OS 9x  Win95  Linux  
 OS X  Win98  WinME

Computer Make/Model: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about SVCG?

class  club member  newspaper  newsletter

User Level:  Novice  Intermediate  
 Advanced  Expert

Take newsletter online vs. by mail? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_



Sonoma Valley Computer Group  
POB 649  
El Verano, CA 95433

Postage

- Mac/Windows Q&A
- How to Backup Your Data with John Nouveaux

Place Label Here

Date: Saturday, 5/14/2005  
Place: Sonoma Public Library  
755 West Napa Street  
Time: 9:30am to 11:00am



# Sonoma Valley Computer Group Newsletter



Apple User Group

for Mac and Windows Users

