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NEWS AND VIEWS

By Chuck Hajdú

Once again MSFT is creating an atmosphere of Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt (FUD). This time it's for the release date of Service Pack 1 for WinV. The latest rumor we've heard is "the second half of 2007". Let's see, October 1st starts the second half of the second half of 2007. Yep, that's MSFT.

Why is SP1 important? Simple, most experienced users always wait for the improved version of any MSFT OS. Do you remember Win3.0? Win95, before OSR2? WinMe (never SP'd because it was so bad)? I think you get the picture. Once SP1 comes out many more corporate users will be willing to test the waters and start to "upgrade" their systems.

Once again, the difference in philosophy for MSFT and the Open Source community is glaringly obvious. Would you like to know the update schedule for all of the Ubuntu versions and variations? Just go to www.ubuntu.com and you'll find the schedule of updates.

Why does MSFT continue to use FUD as a weapon? That's the eas-

ies rhetorical question I've ever asked myself. To scare potential buyers away from competing products of course!

Over the years I've been subjected to countless MSFT presentations showing their latest groundbreaking software that will be available "soon". Of course, the demo was all vaporware and the whole exercise was designed to get them positive ink and cause potential buyers of superior competing products to delay while they waited for MSFT stuff.

The second part of the WinV SP1 rumor is that it's going to be enormous! I've heard a lot of conflicting numbers but everyone agrees that it's not just a tweak, it's more like a full .1 version of the OS.

The last bit of news I've been following is the conflict between MSFT and the Open Source community on whether or not MSFT has to comply with the GPL because of the agreements they're making with Linux companies. This will make it to the courts and I predict another MSFT legal loss.

MCC



TECHNOLOGY SPOTLIGHT

SIBER SYSTEMS ROBOFORM2GO

By Linda Webb

It's challenging enough to remember your web site login information when at home or at work. But it can be especially difficult to recall that information when you use a computer elsewhere.

RoboForm2Go password manager and form-filler software remembers everything for you on a portable USB drive. You simply plug the drive with its special copy of RoboForm Professional into any internet-connected computer.

It took about a minute to copy the RoboForm2Go software to my USB test drive. After I opened Internet Explorer, a window confirmed that RoboForm had launched, and then the RoboForm toolbar appeared in Internet Explorer, right under the address line. An icon was also added to my Windows systray for easy access to all of RoboForm2Go's system options.

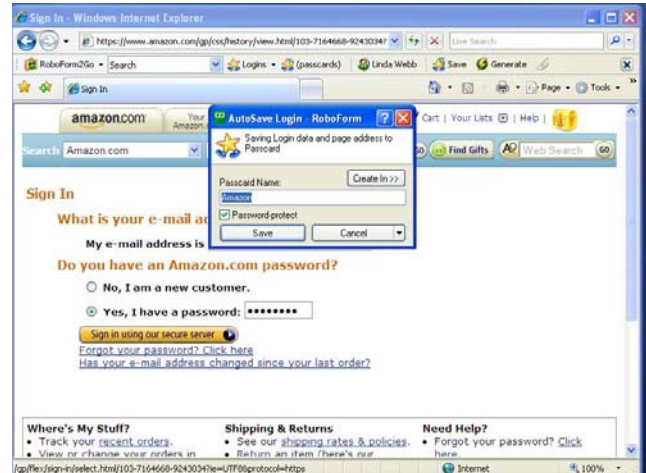
Next I logged into a web site, and the RoboForm AutoSave window appeared, offering to store my login data in a passcard. It created a suggested passcard name, and then saved the website address, plus all of the data needed to fill in the fields on the login form.

Once saved, when you open your browser and select a passcard, it launches the website, fills in the login information, and then submits it to log you into the site automatically. Or, if you visit a site for which you have an existing passcard, you can either have

RoboForm just fill in the login fields, or have it both fill the fields and log you in automatically.

Passcards are easily editable. And you can set a master password to protect passcards containing sensitive personal or financial information, a comforting idea should your RoboForm2Go drive get lost or stolen.

When you remove the USB drive, all traces of



RoboForm disappear from the computer. And if you happen to remove the drive while your browser is open, RoboForm does its removal trick, but politely leaves your browser intact for continued use.

Extra features are plentiful. You can create and password-protect identities -- files that hold extensive personal and financial information -- to fill online registration forms or complete order checkout pages. Your passcards can easily be organized into folders. And if you already own a RoboForm license for your main computer, you can copy its existing passcards to your RoboForm2Go drive.

I really liked safenotes, little files where you can protect snippets of secret or sensitive data for quick recall. And instead of the familiar passwords we tend to create that are all too easily hackable, the password generator can create strong passwords -- and automatically enter them into password fields for you.

RoboForm2Go contains no adware or spyware, and supports 28 languages. It runs on Windows computers with Internet Explorer, Netscape, Mozilla, and Firefox. Responses to my two questions were provided in the password-protected online support site within only hours.

Price: New License, \$39.95; Add to existing RoboForm License, \$19.95; RoboForm 2Go USB Drive, \$9.95 with license purchase
 Minimum requirements: Windows 98, Me, NT4, 2000, 2003, XP or Vista; Internet Explorer 5.5 or later
 Rating: 6 of 6
www.roboform.com



Linda Webb, M.Ed.
Emerging Technology Editor

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF MULTIMEDIA

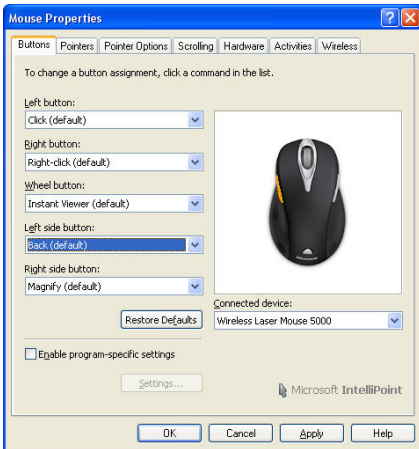
MICROSOFT WIRELESS LASER DESKTOP 5000

By George Harding

Wow, what a collection of useful stuff! This Microsoft product packages a keyboard and a mouse which intends to eliminate your regular keyboard and mouse. The two are still separate, but are connected to the computer not by wires, but by a wireless connection.

The mouse operates with a laser, which replaces both the old ball type mouse and the newer optical mouse. The mouse is ergonomically shaped to fit your hand, with grooves on both sides. There are two buttons on the upper left side and upper right side of the mouse, buttons not usually present on a mouse.

The upper left and right buttons can be assigned to any function you wish. The default assignment is Back (as with a web page) for the upper left button, and Magnify for the upper right button. Magnify is a better magnify than the one that ships with Windows, because you can increase or decrease the size of the magnification window. It's easy to use and you can turn it off by clicking the upper right button again.



The back end of the mouse has a small triangular button used to communicate with the wireless receiver. There is a similar button on the underside of the keyboard as well. The receiver is a small oval block which is connected to a USB port on your computer.



George Harding

To make both the keyboard and mouse work, they must be properly connected wirelessly. Making this connection was troublesome for me. The connection



buttons on keyboard and mouse are used to signal the receiver. If the receiver doesn't recognize either one, one problem may be that the devices are too far away or are physically blocked. The Help manual points out that the maximum distance for the mouse is about 6 feet from the receiver, but does not mention a distance for the keyboard; presumably it also is 6 feet.

When either device is not recognized by the receiver, the procedure is to reset both with the connection button, then re-signal with the receiver. That worked for me.

Both the keyboard and the mouse require two AA batteries, which are provided in the product package. The package also contains a Help manual, which gives very little actual help. There are 8 pages, each of which has a picture and an instruction; the English instruction is repeated in four other languages. One further manual is included, with 53 pages of warnings of various sorts and support contact info; all is repeated in four other languages.

The package also contains a CD-ROM, which installs the drivers for mouse and keyboard, as well as Help files for each. These files are the real source for help on understanding the mouse and keyboard functions.

Physical installation is simple. First the CD-ROM to install drivers, then connect the receiver to a USB port, then install the batteries in keyboard and mouse. Both units should now work. It is not necessary to disconnect your prior keyboard and mouse, though you probably will. Some BIOSes will object if

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF MULTIMEDIA

(Continued from page 3)

no keyboard is attached to the keyboard port.

The keyboard has a very nice, quiet touch. It is ergonomic, being slightly sloped away from you to keep your hands from bending upward when you have them on the keyboard. There is a 2 inch wristboard, which makes typing quite comfortable.



The most noticeable part of the keyboard is the additional keys. There are 4 keys at the very top for DVD manipulation, followed by two buttons which increase volume and decrease volume. To the right of these, still at the very top, are five numbered buttons, each of which can be assigned to any file, program or web site—a pretty handy feature! There is also a Show Favorites key (a star) which displays the current assignment of the numbered keys and a Change link for revising the assignment.

There are the Windows and right-click menu keys that have become pretty standard these days for keyboards. But the big additions are the buttons on the far left and top right.

There are two buttons on the top right, just above the numeric keypad. The first is a one-click button to bring up calculator. The other brings up the Log Off Windows dialog, which may be of use in a business environment, but is of no use to me.

On the upper left are a pair of buttons labeled with left and right arrows. They are used with web pages

to go to previous and next pages without having to click on the Back and Forward browser buttons.

Next on the left comes a group of six buttons, each of which is labeled fairly intuitively. The first has a symbol reflecting a page, which opens the My Documents folder. The second has a house, which opens a browser to your home page. The third opens the

My Pictures folder and the fourth opens your default email program. The fifth opens the My Music folder and the sixth opens your Live Messenger program, if you have one.

Below this grouping are two separate buttons. The first has a plus sign inside a magnifying glass; the button is a toggle to increase or decrease the size of type in the document you are currently viewing. It also works on a web page if that page supports increase/decrease functions (some don't).

The last button, Gadgets, connects you to a web page that has several live information items that may be of interest to you.

This is a nice product, one that you'll like if you have it, but you may decide its features aren't worth the price. I probably would not buy this product, but only because of the price. Otherwise, it is thoughtfully built and is pleasing to use.

Price from \$80 to \$100, depending on store
www.microsoft.com

BLACKBERRY 8830 WORLD EDITION

By B.T. Woody

As a user and admirer of all that is Blackberry, I had the opportunity to review one of the latest models to come from Research in Motion, the **Blackberry 8830 World Edition**. A true marvel at innovation, design and usability, the 8830 offers the average user simplicity while supplying the globe trotting executive productivity and universal capability.

The last review I did on a Blackberry model was the 7130e, a great phone with tremendous capabilities, however I would gladly trade the 7130e for an 8830 any day of the week. The primary draw to the 8830 is its use "worldwide" as a cell phone and to receive and distribute e-mails. Using CDMA (code-division multiple access) and GSM (global system mobile) technology, users are afforded the capabilities they have only dreamed of to place and receive phone calls from 157 countries and e-mail coverage throughout 62 countries (rates your checkbook may not be able to handle). Another draw to the 8830 is definitely the network, Verizon was the initial company to offer the 8830 followed by Sprint and T-Mobile, however, after having used the aforementioned companies, "it's the network" slogan seems to ring true. Verizon has been the only network that I have had the least dropped calls or spotty coverage, I seriously expected the guy from the Verizon commercials to be looking over my shoulder asking, "Can you hear me now"? Unfortunately I was personally unable to test the 8830's global capabilities.

The 8830 is the first Blackberry I have used that is equipped with the "trackball" beneath the center display for navigation. Compared to the side mounted track wheel, the Trackball is a better and more functional design. The 8830 also offers a full QWERTY keyboard, however, the biggest complaint I have read about has come from the keyboard. There is virtually no spacing in between the keys and I can understand certain individuals with large fingers having a difficult time. This is really a non-issue, as with any new product that you are unfamiliar with, it takes time and experience to master. I tried typing a paragraph as fast as I could to see if the keyboard would interfere or cause a typo, after 125



B.T. Woody

words or so I discovered only two corrections that needed to be made. Not too bad. The only complaint on the silver model is the blue back lighted keyboard, even under the best of conditions it can be difficult to read the alphanumeric characters on the keys.

The 8830 is also taller and slimmer than you may expect for a Blackberry, with a 2.5-inch screen that is clear and easy to read with light-sensing technology that automatically adjusts the backlighting of the screen, the keyboard, and the trackball, depending on whether you're indoors or outdoors. The volume keys are located on the right side and are convenient when using the phone. Sound quality is clear while using the handset and there were no major issues with sound quality using the speakerphone either. The 8830 is equipped with a programmable convenience key on the left side that is defaulted to voice dialing that does leave something to be desired. Unless you speak clear and concise, in a noiseless room, the 8830 has a difficult time discerning what contact or number you are requesting. Additional features include a microSD slot located behind the battery cover and a sim slot on the top that adds additional memory for videos, music or pictures.

Setup was simple. The 8830 has an onscreen setup function for personal information, contacts and the most important, e-mail. Within minutes of typing in my e-mail address and password, I was receiving my e-mails from multiple accounts; extremely easy for the non-POP3, IP address knowing individual. Of course, RIM also offers different customizable themes allowing the user to place the more important functions of the 8830 on the "desktop" and hide the ones you never use.

Bottom line for the 8830; it is a solid and reliable phone, organizer and e-mail client. Verizon offers the 8830 with a 2 year contract for \$199.99 that includes an online discount and a mail-in rebate. Rates for e-mail, SMS and calls are pretty standard inside the US. For the casual user once again looking for organization or for the world traveler, I suspect that 8830 will provide reliable service and performance. RIM never fails to deliver a quality product and it is no wonder that they continue to be the industry leader and standard bearer when it comes to e-mail, mobile web browsing and now global capability.

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OTTERBOX 1933

(Continued from page 5)

Otterbox 1933 case for Blackberry 8800 series.



BB 8830 alone and in the Otterbox 1933 Case

The carrying case that came with the 8830 was one of it's worst features. Fortunately we received an Otterbox 1933 case as we were doing this review. The Otterbox case provides additional bump, scratch and drop protection as well as light rain protection. Note: this case is not waterproof and Otterbox stresses point strongly. They include a belt clip that is very well designed and works better than the BB case.

The Otterbox case provides 3 layers of protection - a thermal formed protective clear membrane protects the screen, the case itself is hi-impact polycarbonate and there is a silicone skin to absorb bump and shock.

For environmental protection: Drop and Shock - MIL-STD 810F, 36" to plywood on concrete. Water Protection - IPX2, protected against dripping water
Dust Protection - IP4X, protected against solid objects greater than 1mm

If you are willing to invest your time and money in an 8830 then you should protect your considerable investment with an Otterbox case.

MSRP is \$49.95
www.otterbox.com

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OTTO MODEL OT-9

By Diana Meade

The **OTTO Isolating Ear Buds** have been a revelation to me. They aren't just light weight and comfortable to use, they have wonderful audio performance. I normally dislike headsets of any kind but I found these to be very comfortable, they felt like the ear plugs I use every night in bed to block out my husband's snoring!



The OTTO come is a variety of colors: silver, black, pink, red. I had the they looked very headset cable is good for most

Model OT-9s of colors: silver, green, blue and silver ones and high tech! The 45" long and that is MP3 players.

I used them for the first time on a long road trip and they did a very effective job of blocking outside noise and allowing me to enjoy my music. They were very comfortable, even when I had them in for several hours.

The OT-9s come with small, medium and large earpieces so you should have no problem finding a good fit. There is also a nice case included that will hold your headphones and MPs player.

Technical specifications:

- Speaker Type: 8mm Driver
- Cable Length: 45 inches (1.15m)
- Net Weight: 0.4oz (11.34g)
- Connector: 3.5 mm stereo plug
- Impedance (at 1kHz): 16 Ohm; Sensitivity (at 1kHz): 105dB SPL/mW

My only minor complaint is the 45" long cord. It's ideal for portable players but is just a bit too short for desktop use. It's OK for laptops but I needed another six inches of cord to use it comfortably with my desktop.

I highly recommend the OTTO Isolating Earbuds, they are better than any earbuds or headsets I've ever used.

MSRP is \$69.95
www.hearotto.com

MCC

US GLOBALSAT G-SAT GV-370

By Chuck Hajdú

The **US GlobalSat G-sat GV-370** is a newer model auto GPS unit and it solves one of the ongoing problems with early models. Early consumer GPS products didn't have enough built in memory to hold a lot of map data. That meant users had to select sections of the country on their computer to upload into the limited GPS unit's memory or load the data onto a memory card. IF they unit accepted them! The GV-370 comes with a 2GB SD card with pre-loaded detailed maps of the US of A, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands and Canada preloaded. Thank you!



play the songs sequentially. Movies must be encoded in MPG and DAT format to be played by the Movie player. Naturally, only one of these applications can run at a time so if you're using GPS navigation you can't also use the MP3 player.

What did we like?

The first thing we liked is the front mounted controls. The speaker, mute button, zoom in, zoom out and system menu buttons are right there where you can see them. They were designed perfectly.

The second thing we liked was the clarity of the voice instructions. We've tested units that sounded like Cylon rejects but not this one. The voice is clear, distinct and with excellent volume. Of course, there were a few funny pronunciations. The GV-370 had problem with Roseberry Street (pronounced Rose-berry) and kept saying Ross-a-berry. It also blew Limekiln Road into something unpronounceable.

We were also very impressed with the speed of re-routing if we decided to use a route other than the one suggested.

What's in the box?

The G-sat GV3-70 comes with the main unit, a USB cable, both 12v DC and 110v AC charger cables, a windshield mount, a cradle, a DVD with user manual, drivers and map data and the 2GB SD card we mentioned earlier. It's actually more than most other units provide. We do have one suggestion for US GlobalSat. They might want to consider one USB cable and plug adapters for power from AC and auto. That could save them some money in manufacturing.

Specifications:

Processor - Samsung S3C2410-266MHz
 OS - WinCE.NET 4.2 core
 ROM Memory - 64MB (NAND Flash Memory)
 SDRAM Memory - 64MB
 GPS Receiver - SiRF Star III High sensitivity chip-set - 20 Channel
 Operation Time - 2.75 hrs
 Charge Time - 4.5 hrs
 Display Size H*W - 3.5" (Diagonal)
 Pixels H*W - 240*320 (QVGA)
 Display Type - Color TFT Daylight LCD

How does it work?

Thanks to the pre-loaded maps, using the GV-370 is a breeze. If you want to do some pre-trip setup, just plug the AC power cord in, insert the 2GB SD card and turn it on. The boot time is fairly quick, it takes only a few seconds from power on to usability. The start screen offers icons for Navigation, Photo, Music, Setup and Movie. The Photo View application scans memory cards for JPG images and displays them as thumbnails that can then be viewed full screen. The Music icon opens an MP3 player that scans SD/MMC cards for MP3 audio files that creates play lists that

What didn't we like.

Of all things, the Windshield mount never worked right. It just refused to stay sucked to the windshield or dashboard. Fortunately we had an identical mount from a Magellan unit in our test vehicle and we just screwed the GV-370 cradle onto it. In two weeks of testing it never came loose. The GV-370 mount and the Magellan mount appear to be identical, there was just something wrong with the clear plastic suction-thingie on the GV-370 unit.

The second thing we didn't like was the use of old data provided by Navteq. We've tested several units lately that had much newer and more accurate map data. The Navteq street level data is at least three years old and many streets that we use every day are missing.

Recommendation.

The G-Sat GV-370 is an excellent auto GPS unit and we recommend it highly.

MSRP is \$499.99 but right now it's available for \$359.99

www.usglobalsat.com

LEXMARK C500N

By Karen Harper

My review this month is for the **Lexmark C500n** high impact color laser printer. You will discover, as I have, there are several reasons to purchase this product, and only two objections I have for not buying it.

The Lexmark C500 series offers quality color printing for an affordable price. On average a new Lexmark C500n will run approximately \$349.00. The big bonus though is the toner is extremely below the average price for refills. As many of you that own color laser printers know, the cost for owning one isn't the price of the machine, but in replacing the ink and toner. Lexmark.com offers the black high yield toner cartridge for \$134.70 and the color cartridges are \$119.70 each. The C500 takes Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow as its color toners. When price shopping on the internet I found www.superwarehouse.com. The prices for the Lexmark C500 black toner was \$83.99 and the color toners were \$91.99. That is over half the price of the toner cartridges on the Konica Minolta Color Laser printer I did a review on over a year ago. So a word to the wise, before purchasing your new color laser printer, know what the refill toners will cost you and comparatively shop the other brands.

The statistics about the Lexmark C500 are equally impressive. The Lexmark C500 has a 200 MHz processor with 64 MB of memory. The printing is 1200 x dpi and there is up to 31ppm mono and 8 ppm color. From the time you click print on your screen, it is 13 seconds or less for the black and white sheets to print and as fast as 19 seconds for the color. The Lexmark is Ethernet network ready. For several reasons this printer is perfect for my home and family use. It also provides for everything I need to run my small at home business.

The Lexmark is considered "space saving" compared to other printers its type on the market. I still find it is slightly heavy and bulky. It definitely requires its own spot for operation. The Lexmark is very easy to operate with its front loading toner cartridges. It has a clear display screen on top of the system that is easy to read and alerts you to lack of paper or low toner. The Lexmark runs very quietly and when in "sleep" mode it doesn't run at all and it never recycles itself with those annoying run up noises printers tend to make.



In my opinion the Lexmark has two points of weakness. First the Lexmark arrived in a box with a cable, program disk, and a set up poster printed in several languages. From the poster I had no problem interpreting how to set up the system. I understood how to load and install the program into my computer thanks to previous practice. I am however 95% of the time technologically challenged. I would have enjoyed several times in the past three months having had a manual to reference. I have no idea to this date what type of additional messages I might receive on my screen on top of the printer. I don't know how to change my toners when the time comes, and there is an extra Ethernet cable I am pretty sure I don't need, but would like to still know what it does. Call me old school, but I think a hard copy booklet or manual might be a nice extra touch of customer service that Lexmark could provide for their customers. The second downfall is that I have tried twice to print on legal paper and have been unsuccessful. There is no way to just put legal paper into the letter tray and there is no manual feed. Both of these are features some printers offer. Instead I discovered you have to actually purchase the Lexmark C500n Legal tray and on Lexmark.com it runs \$129.00. I personally believe the trays should be included with the printer at the time of purchase.

In conclusion I rank the Lexmark C500 Color Laser Printer an overall 8 out of a possible 10. I recommend it for those wanting a good reliable color laser printer for a decent price. It is perfect for the home, small business, and anyone planning on printing a lot and having to replace their toners more often than not.

MSRP is \$349.00
www.lexmark.com

MOVING TO DUAL MONITORS

MATROX DUALHEAD2GO DIGITAL EDITION, SOYO GO.VIDEO 19" LCDS

By Chuck Hajdú

Most multi-tasking computer users have run into situations where they wish they had two monitors hooked up to their PC so they could work on multiple projects at once without having to minimize windows. I'm sure there isn't an editor on the planet that wouldn't love to have as many monitors as possible to help get their work done easier. I've been using a Gateway E-4610D with dual 19" LCD monitors for several months now and couldn't live without them. The Gateway's video card supports dual monitors so it was easy to set up and use.

But what if your video card doesn't support dual monitors? Are you out of luck? Not any more! The **Matrox DualHead2Go Digital Edition** is a multi-display adapter that connects to your PC and monitors and *may* be a solution!

Take note of the "may" in the previous paragraph. The DualHead2Go only works with specific hardware and you should go to the Matrox web site to see if your system is compatible. We downloaded the GXM Compatibility Tool and tested several systems in our lab to see if we had a system that we could test with. Fortunately, we had several systems that passed the test so we were good to go.

What's in the box?

- the DualHead2Go Digital Edition connector box
- One 2-foot HD15-to-HD15 (analog) monitor cable
- One USB cable
- The software CD-ROM

System requirements:

- Single VGA output connector, on a **compatible** system
- WinXp, Win2K, WinV and Mac OS X v10.4
- Display driver supporting 2048 x 768 or 2560 x 1024 resolution



We chose our Gateway S-7200C Tablet PC as our test system. It passed the compatibility test and seemed to be an ideal choice. The next choice was monitors.

The **SOYO Go.Video 19" LCDs** looked like they would be good choices. We have always been impressed with the quality of construction and performance of SOYO LCDs and we had a set of them available.



What's in the box?

- Two 19" TFT-LCD monitors
- a User Manual
- a dual monitor stand
- power cords
- DVI cables
- Audio cables

Step one is putting the monitor stand together and attaching the two LCDs. It's not complicated but you'll need a screwdriver and patience. There are eight screws to put in and then tweaking the screen alignment. BTW, the same stand is used for both the 17" and 19" units and the frame is clearly marked to let you know which holes to use.

To connect the DualHead2Go up to the LCDs all you need to do is, with power turned OFF on the PC and LCDs,:

- plug the Matrox cable and USB cable into one side of DualHead2Go
- plug the other end of these cables into the PC
- plug the monitor cables into the other side of the unit and connect the cables to the LCDs

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DUAL MONITORS

(Continued from page 9)

Now you can turn on the PC and LCDs and you should see the green power light come on the DualHead2Go. I doubt if any PC that has the required OS and video card won't have a powered USB port, but if you do you'll need a powered USB adapter.

Next we got down the installing the software for the DualHead2Go. When our PC first booted we had the number one/left LCD working perfectly. We ran the Matrox CD to install the required software and rebooted.

After the reboot we still had to do some system tweaking to get everything working properly. To Matrox's credit, the user manual on the CD does a very good job of dealing with all of the normal problems and offering suggestions for each of the OSs they support.

Once we got the problems worked out, we were able to enjoy the incredible clarity and brilliance of the SOYO LCDs. It always amazes me how much difference a truly bright, clear display makes!

Before we finished up we tried our standard Xandros Linux test. Many hardware products we've tested were not supposed to work with Linux but work beautifully with Xandros. Unfortunately, the DualHead2Go isn't one of them. Our suggestion to Matrox is to catch the wave and support Linux.

Our overall impression of the DualHead2Go is that it can be a useful upgrade for users who want to switch to dual monitors but not dig into their PC and add a new video card. It's also useful for laptop users who can't upgrade their internal video card.

As for the SOYO Go.Video 19" Dual LCD Monitors, if your video system supports dual monitors, go buy a set of these beauties immediately!

Matrox DualHead2Go Digital Edition
MSRP is \$229.
www.matrox.com

SOYO Go.Video 19" Dual LCD Monitors
MSRP is \$1,049 but they are available right now for only \$479
www.soyousa.com

SAMSUNG L74 WIDE

By Alex Woody

This is the first review I've done for the Monthly Computer Chronicle and I'd like to thank the Editor for giving me this opportunity. (Editor's note: you're welcome).

I don't have a lot of experience with cameras of any kind and the Samsung L74 Wide turned out to be a perfect camera for me to use. The number of controls are minimal and the instructions are clearly written and explained everything I needed to know.

I'm not going to go into a lot of technical stuff because, quite frankly, it's all Greek/Geek to me. What I want a camera to do is take good pictures without confusing me too much.



Most of the cameras I've seen in use before never seem to take a picture of the whole room. A lot of stuff is missing. Every time there's a group picture everyone is told to scrunch up. The L74 has a wide-angle lens and it takes pictures that include all the stuff that other cameras miss. I really liked the fact that I could fit everyone in a picture without having to worry about who was missing.

The L74 Wide also does a good job of taking close up pictures. My favorite subject is Snickers, my puppy dog. All of my pictures were very clear and the flash did a good job of lighting him. A lot of cameras don't take good pictures in low light but this one did. If I were going to buy a digital camera, I would buy this one.

MSRP is \$349.99
www.samsungcamera.com

"You've got to learn to dance before you learn to crawl" - Alex Woody

LINUX WORLD 2007

TWO VIEWS FROM THE TRENCHES

Penguins Seen Alive and Well at LinuxWorld

By Bayle Emlein

Penguins are not an endangered species. Recently seen cavorting through Moscone Center in San Francisco, Linux and its penguin flock showed every sign of a continued population expansion. And like every population that becomes established in its environment, Linux in the world and LinuxWorld have changed. The floor at the early August LinuxWorld seemed sedate and corporate to those of us who remember vendors in geek attire (old tee shirt, jeans or chinos, flip-flops, pony-tail) sharing information with similarly-dressed hordes. Now, AMD and Intel and APC have big booths. Lots of companies have professional presenters conducting sit-down demos with soft chairs.



Unruly attendee hijacks vehicle display

Palm chose this expo to set out a large pre-release display of its new Foléo device. This is a gizmo clearly aimed at mobile professionals with discretionary cash and time on their hands. Embedded Linux was its excuse for being there. The same for a variety of impressive Linux equipped vehicles.

I settled into a cushy bean-bag with my cup of java from Dice (the techie version of CareerFinder), and agreed with the person next to me that the show seemed less energetic than in years past. He commented that we'll know Linux is truly mature when the LinuxWorld shows die altogether, that is, when Linux

becomes so ubiquitous that it is taken for granted every where. Possibly true, but disappointing to contemplate for a show-goer.

Then I rounded a corner and found myself in the DotOrg section. Some new names, but the same start-up energy that doesn't know what can't be done. From Ark to Zenwalk, these people are the ultimate Linux enthusiasts. Linux may be tamed by corporate culture, but the spirit of Linux still lives here.

LinuxWorld may be showing its corporate pinstripes, but, like CES, it's the place to go to see what's going to show up in your next electronic gadget. I'll be there next year.

Tux Isn't The Only One In A Suit. . .

by Jan Fagerholm, PCC Penguinista

LinuxWorld is a convention organized around Linux in the Real World. Starting out at the San Jose Fairgrounds in 1999, it has progressed to Moscone Center in San Francisco in recent years. LinuxWorld is the show of the year for penguinistas, and I usually make it a point to attend.

As Linux has penetrated big business, the flavor of the exhibitors has changed. When I began attending the show, small entrepreneurial companies were the norm and the uniform was tee-shirts and sandals. This year, I wore my usual tee-shirt and shorts, an I was decidedly singular in my fashion sense: the crowd was predominantly the IT person's uniform of polo shirt and chinos, and a dense population of suits. (I did get a lot of inquiries about my cool purple penguinista tee-shirt. I sadly reported that it came from last year's LinuxWorld.)

Like many computer conventions, LinuxWorld has changed a lot. As computers get commoditized, the enthusiast audience is reduced. The show and its audience looks a lot like any mainstream business convention: if it wasn't for the corporate logos, it's hard to tell it was a computer show.

AMD and Intel had a strong presence, as did software makers Novell (SuSE) and Red Hat. New to

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LINUX WORLD 2007

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LinuxWorld was Dell, who has dabbled in Linux servers for a couple of years, but now promotes several desktop and laptop machines with Ubuntu Linux pre-installed. This is big news to penguinistas, and is a strong sign of Linux acceptance from a company that has historically marched a narrow Wintel path. HP has sold Linux servers for several years and was there to remind us of that. A new wrinkle in partnering was that AMD and Intel ran "tours", taking groups around to the booths of their business partners and pattering in front of each, winding up where we started with a reward for taking the tour. The cynic in me was amused that several of the booths included in both AMD and Intel's tours were the same vendors.



Ubuntu is the world's most popular Linux distribution

Other major vendors not normally thought of as "computer" companies were also present: Motorola, NEC, EMC, and others – They are using embedded Linux in many of their products and were hawking these wares. Palm did brisk floor traffic showing off its new Foleo, a Linux-based screen and keyboard terminal for the Treo crowd who needs that full-sized screen and keyboard once in a while.

Notable for its absence was IBM, who has spent about two billion dollars on its Linux business and is a major adopter. There were no juicy rumors about why they weren't there. Microsoft, who has had an on-off presence at LinuxWorld, was not there this time, but Windows IT Pro magazine had a small booth – they know that IT professionals walk both sides of the OS fence.

The greatest increased presence this year were companies hawking embedded Linux. It shows up in more phones and PDAs than ever, and dominates the industrial controller market (machines that make other machines work). For example, in the European Union, Ericsson dominates the phone market and Linux dominates Ericsson phones.

You may gather from all this that LinuxWorld has a strong bizdroid flavor, but there is still something there for The Rest Of Us. Off in its own section of the floor is the .ORG Pavilion, where all the open source stuff is. The atmosphere is decidedly more, um, "open" than the rest of the show. Here I was totally in character in my tee-shirt and shorts, I could discuss .configure and Make with gesticulating geeks and picked up several useful tips on Linux distros that I dabble with. Ubuntu was passing out disks like lollipops, and Debian had a Web cam displaying video of the passing crowd rendered in ASCII characters (think ASCII art) and the effect is very amusing. The software to accomplish this is included in nearly every Linux distribution, so of course I had to try this when I ran home.

LinuxWorld is a great place to get a glimpse of what Linux is all about. It may come preinstalled on the next PC you buy, it will likely come in the next electronic gadget that you buy, and it will even be in the next car that you buy. There are lots of hands-on computers with people anxious to show it off, and there is lots of bleeding-edge technology on display. LinuxWorld is worth a look, even if you don't know anything about Linux. You will find it much more interesting after LinuxWorld.



THE DEALS GUY

by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click,
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

*Feedback

I heard from several readers who said they have been successfully traveling with only a "special" flash drive for some time. I hadn't seen a review on this, or read about it as a meeting presentation last year if they were available? I read a lot, especially the UG newsletters I get. I only learned about the USB U3 drives last spring when I purchased a San Disk Flash Drive that I thought was a bargain. When I plugged it into the USB port just to take a look, I thought it was installing something on my HD. I was upset and wanted to know what was going on without my permission. Then I read the enclosed folder about the software preinstalled on that "U3" drive, and other software available on their Web site for it. I was confused and tried unsuccessfully to learn more about it. Around the first of the year was the first I read a review, but without understanding it, I was still confused. Last month I included the article about that topic because I know I'm not the only person behind on new technology knowledge.

*Lets Look At The Pluses!

I reviewed Microsoft Money a few years ago and started actually using it when my favorite money program, "Managing Your Money," turned to providing software for banks. I have differences with some Microsoft policies, such as Genuine Advantage, and their product activation process, but when it comes to MS Money; that tech support is the best in the business. Each version I have used came with three years of support via an 800 number. They try hard to answer your questions and do not speak broken English. So far, I've talked to tech support in Newfoundland three times, and they have resolved my questions, followed by an e-mail thanking me for using MS Money and saying that if the issue was still not resolved, they are there to clear it up. The phone waiting time has never been long. What a great value for a product that costs so little. There are things I would like to see improved; such as when I back it up before closing the program, it doesn't limit the number of backups on my external USB flash drive, but that's a minor problem.



Bob Click
The Deals Guy

*Emergency ID And Medical Information

What if you were traveling and became involved in an accident leaving you incapacitated! How would an ambulance medic and ER facility know how to correctly treat you if your medical condition was special, or you had preferences? In my case, I'm diabetic and now take Coumadin (blood thinner) so it would be important for the medic to know that. Identification Devices L.L.C. offers a compact USB Flash drive to hold vital information that could help a medic make the right decisions. Wear it around your neck, or even put it on your key chain so a medic can see it (the Medical logo is on one side) when examining you, and can then plug it into the USB port on their laptop. Instantly, it gives the default choice to open your information screen. That instantly brings to their computer screen a form with your necessary medical and other information, along with your picture. You simply type in all the necessary information yourself, no complicated instruction to follow, just fill in the labeled blanks.

The company sent me one to try and I was impressed with how easy it was to use and type in the necessary data. The data includes your personal information with emergency phone numbers for whomever you designate, and your doctors, drugs, important medical warnings (if necessary), your insurance companies and also your attorney information. There is a spot for your picture in the upper corner, and even a way to load PDF files for important documents such as a living will, power of attorney, your own personal instructions and other important documents if you want them there. I was impressed that most of the blanks in the form could be expanded to a larger space by double-clicking them to insert additional information, such as additional doctors, medications and other vital information. It can be password protected if you desire, but I wouldn't want that. The MSRP is \$24.95 + \$4.95 S & H.

They are offering DealsGuy readers a \$2.50 discount, but only if you call 1-866-955-0535 to order and mention the DealsGuy column. Larger orders can get a better discount. Ignoring the discount, you can order it on their Web site <<http://www.identificationdevices.net>> using your credit card. I think this product is a great value.

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THE DEALS GUY

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***Be Aware**

If you are interested in either of the products below, be sure to do your homework and check their Web site for further information because I edited a lot of information out of them to make them fit. I have not tried either product.

***Hope My Wife Doesn't Use This Remote Control Stuff On Me!**

Anyplace Control Software released version 4.0 of Anyplace Control, an acknowledged remote monitoring solution. The new version extends the frontiers of remote control and now can bypass routers and firewalls, as well as support PCs with dynamic IPs.

Anyplace Control displays the desktop of the remote computer, letting you use your own keyboard and mouse to control it remotely. At any point in time, and to any place in the world that has Internet connection, you can monitor your PC and get data transferred to or from it. The program can be used in a LAN, and it doesn't need a Web connection. Anyplace Control can connect to multiple computers at a time. With Anyplace Control, you will get the smoothest remote connection experience along with full control over the system without an external static IP address. Another good thing is that the program can automatically bypass routers and firewalls that lie between the remote computer and your machine.

You no longer need to spend time sending files via e-mail because it's easier to transfer them directly. The program can transfer any kind of data, and you can be sure that the information you send will be delivered immediately with no response delay. Home users can use the program to get access to their office computers and work from home, or check their own PC while away from home.

Anyplace Control runs under all versions of Microsoft Windows and costs \$22 (USD) for a single-user license. Licensed customers are entitled to free technical support and upgrades. More information on Anyplace Control, as well as a free trial copy is available free of charge from <<http://www.anyplace-control.com>>.

"I'd like to offer your group a 10% discount. Please contact me at info@anyplace-control.com and name your group to get the discount." (DealsGuy comment: take a close look at their refund policy and the discount!").

Regards,
Goncharuk Yuriy
Chief Executive Officer
yura@anyplace-control.com

Direct download link: <<http://www.anyplace-control.com/anyplace-control/data/AnyplaceControlInstall.exe>> (2.7 Mb)

***A Freebie For Managing Your Downloads**

FreeDownloadManager.org announced the release of a new version of their Free Download Manager. The list of FDM features includes accelerating downloads up to 600%, resuming broken downloads, simultaneous downloading from several mirrors, http/https/ftp/bittorrent support, flash video downloads support, video conversion and more. FDM 2.5 is released under the GPL license and is now open-source software.

The new version of Free Download Manager stands out due to its expanded possibilities. Now, FDM works as an upload manager as well, making it easy to share files with other people. FDM now allows downloading files using Bittorrent protocol, as well as downloading video from video sites, such as YouTube, Google Video, MySpace videos, etc. The video can be saved in native .flv format or converted to one of more of the popular video formats. The FDM Team has also added more flexibility to the software providing an opportunity to control FDM remotely, via the Internet. Another new feature, portable mode, will be especially appreciated by users who want to always have the program close at hand. They can easily create FDM portable version and enjoy the software on every computer without another installation.

For more information on FDM, visit the product web site: <<http://www.freedownloadmanager.org>>
Download link: <<http://www.freedownloadmanager.org/fdminst.exe>>

That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my Web site (most not offering a discount). Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound.
<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.

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I call that bold talk from a four-eyed fat man.

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