

Firefox Browser (the alternative to Internet Explorer)

Thursday, March 10, 2005, 7 P.M.
Lecture Hall of the Carr-Gottstein Academic Center
Main Campus, Alaska Pacific University

Firefox, the browser developed originally as part of the *Mozilla* suite (browser, email, news reader, composer, etc.) is free (as in **Freedom**) software that runs on many platforms including the various *Windows* versions in use today. [Walter S. Mossberg](#) in his December 20th column in the **Wall Street Journal** describes the many features of *Firefox* as compared with *Internet Explorer*. Security and user's features not found in *IE* lead the list.

Damien Hull will demonstrate installing the free (as in **Beer**) browser in Windows. Damien has been a member of the Alaska Linux Users Group for several years, ([AKLUG](#)), runs a consulting business called [Digital Overload](#) which specializes in custom Linux installations for small businesses. One of his recent efforts was setting up a *thin client* (client/server) computer laboratory for an after school program. One of his problems (as stated in a recent message on the AKLUG list) was that "Linux is boring". That is, it is stable to the extent that his services are not needed after the installation phase is completed.

Damien will bring CD's to give away (free as in **Beer**) containing a number of free (as in **Freedom**) and open source software including *Firefox* for *Windows* users.

The Alaska Computer Society is a nonprofit educational organization. Our meetings are always free and open to the public. We meet the second Thursday of each month, usually at the Carr-Gottstein building at APU.

For further details about our group and a map to the meeting location, visit our web site at

www.acs-pcug.org.

Serving Alaskans since 1983.

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1 Electronics Recycling is on The Horizon

Green Star E-News: February 2005

Green Star is again hosting an Electronics Recycling Event on April 29th and 30th. The event has been extremely successful over the past two years, collecting almost 450 tons of electronics and shipping them to recyclers. Despite the huge quantities recycled since 2003, Green Star receives daily calls from households and businesses in Anchorage and elsewhere in the State asking about recycling opportunities for computers and other electronics. It is clear that the peak in waste electronics generation is yet to come.

“The need still exists to offer the annual event, so we will continue to do so until other opportunities become available,” says Sean Skaling, Green Star’s Executive Director.

The event is still a few months away but now is the time to start saving electronics and identifying what you have stashed in spare offices, in the garage, or under the bed. It’s also time to start recruiting volunteers to help make the event a success. Green Star anticipates needing at least 300 volunteers over the

course of five days to make the event run smoothly.

“Last year’s effort was an amazing display of volunteerism,” says Jeanne Carlson, Program Director at Green Star and volunteer organizer for the event. “We saw many people returning from the first year’s event and lots of new faces. We hope to repeat that trend, building on an enthusiastic volunteer force who already knows the ropes with new folks who want to get involved.”

Individuals and groups are welcome and Green Star encourages businesses and organizations that will be taking advantage of the recycling service to consider putting together a team of employees to help out for a shift at the event.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Jeanne at 278-7839 or Jeanne@greenstarinc.org. Details will be posted on the web within the next few weeks at www.greenstarinc.org (click on Electronics Recycling in Anchorage).

The above press release quoted in part was received early in February too late to be included in the February newsletter.

2 The DealsGuy for March 2005

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

I was going to take an old computer to our beach condo because even though it was old and slow, it would be plenty good enough for just checking my email and miscellaneous tasks. Then around Thanksgiving prices started dropping on new computers and I saw a Dell ad with a 2.2 gig Celeron processor, 256 megs RAM, CD-ROM burner, 17" monitor etc. for \$399 and a \$50 rebate, making it just \$349. That sounded great, so I went to the local mall with a Dell kiosk so I could ask questions, and ordered one. It also included free two-day shipping. It wasn't the latest and greatest, but actually a computer much more modern than my old one, and cheap.

A week later I saw a Dell ad with the same configuration, but also including a printer, for \$349 and no rebate. I still hadn't received the computer I ordered so I called Dell to cancel the original order and get the new deal. They said the original order was already shipped and I should have received it by now. After some conversation about what happened to the two-day shipping, they gave me a \$35 Dell store credit for the inconvenience of not having received it yet. Then I hit them up for the printer at no extra cost because of the new ad. After a little argument, and a five-minute wait for a consultation, they finally conceded and promised to send the printer free of charge.

Five days later I finally received the original computer package I had ordered and was pleased with it. I promptly sent for my rebate and three weeks later was amazed to receive \$60 instead of \$50. However, I still had not received the free printer promised. I called Dell again, gave the tracking number, and found the order had been cancelled, but was offered the option to talk to a human. I laid a guilt complex on Dell for the whole thing and after a pause, they again promised to send a free printer. Two days later a Dell printer arrived and when I opened the box, it was an all-in-1 machine, better than I had expected. Prices in ads have been higher

since and I feel I got a great deal.

The two announcements below look like interesting products, but I have not tried either one.

Tax Time

I forgot to remind you previously about the free version of Tax Act for doing your Federal income tax as well as state tax. Visit

www.taxactsoftware.com

You can download a program FREE to calculate your Federal Income tax. This is the third year I have played with it and while there are a few things I would like to see improved, you can't beat the price. There is also a pay-version, which I use, for \$12.95 that is well worth the price since it gives you one free E-tax filing. The pay version will import last year's data into the new version, which saves a lot of time. You can also do your tax right on the Tax Act Web site if you prefer. All in all, Tax Act is a good deal.

You can also do your tax right on the IRS's own official Web site. I have not tried it, but Ira Wilsker wrote an excellent article on that and if it is not in your newsletter, check the APCUG Web site. I've seen other free options for doing your own income tax calculation, but I don't have that info handy.

Don't forget that AARP has hard working volunteers who will do your tax FREE if its not too complicated, such as if you have rental homes or apartments. Check with your local AARP chapter for the times and places. If you are unsure about whether they will do yours, take it to them and ask. The worst they can do is say "sorry."

Media Catalog Studio Announcement

This was sent to me in November of 2004. They offer a 15% user group discount. Check their Web site for more information.

“For Immediate Release Catalog and classify your media collection easy! November 10, 2004 ManiacTools Releases Media Catalog Studio 1.7

“Media Catalog Studio is a handy software application that classifies and tracks media files on hard-drives, floppies, external drives, CDs, DVDs and other storage media. Importantly, the information about the media files does not need to be entered manually. The program automatically detects MP3, WMA, APE, OGG, WAV, AVI, WMV, MPEG, Video and Audio CD files and inputs this information inside a database. Moreover, the software comes with CDDDB support, an online database that exports information about songs (Title, Artist, Album, Year) directly from Internet.

“All data entries can be sorted by artist, album, year, bitrate, frequency, genre, category, rating, or any field/category. The search in the database can be conducted using multiple parameters, like file properties (name, size, etc), tag information or lyrics. Media file lists can be customized to display information in any way or order. As an added perk, the program features an internal tag reader and editor for audio and video files, duplicates finder, and supports an option for storing pictures. In addition, the application creates Winamp and Windows Media Player play-lists with a few mouse-clicks. The other great features are MS Excel export options and Media Tracker; a feature that shows the user where a necessary media file is located.

Media Catalog Studio has received over a dozen awards for its usability, including the prestigious Five Cows rating at Tucows.Com, and Editor’s Pick at MyMusicTools.com. The program is translated in all major European languages. A free version of Media Catalog Studio Lite 1.7 is available now;

www.maniactools.com

The freeware Lite version supports up to 5 disks in database. An upgrade to a Pro version costs \$24.95 US Dollars/Euros for individuals and \$34.95 US Dollars/Euros for businesses and organizations. We offer a 15% discount to members of your user group. The discount coupon code is 4567841341 and is redeemable at

[www.ManiacTools.com/
soft/media_catalog_studio/discount.shtml](http://www.ManiacTools.com/soft/media_catalog_studio/discount.shtml)

If you have any questions, please contact Alex Pavlenko at

press@maniactools.com

Company Website

www.maniactools.com

Product Page

www.maniactools.com/soft/media_catalog_studio/

Download

www.maniactools.com/media_catalog_studio.exe

Here is an announcement for Fontonizer

I received this announcement in November of 2004 and they offer a 15% discount to user group members.

“Our company, Fast Reports Inc., would like to announce the release of Fontonizer for Windows 95/98/ME/NT/2000/XP. To get 15% discount for Fontonizer use Coupon Code 'UserGroupPR-FO' on register here:

[secure.element5.com/
shareit/checkout.html?productid=168090](http://secure.element5.com/shareit/checkout.html?productid=168090)

“Fontonizer is making big waves in web-design and publishing industries. While an average PC has about one hundred different fonts installed, marketers, designers, publishers, editors and print professionals often have collections with 5000 different fonts or more. With so many fonts, only very experienced professionals can match font name with its appearance. But Fontonizer is not merely a font viewer, though it comes with this function built-in. Fontonizer is a font organizer.

“With Fontonizer, any professional can easily classify fonts. First, one creates categories, like “Business Letter Body”, “Groovy and Hip”, “Classy”, “Headlines”, “Attention Grabbers”, “Exotic”, “Fine print”, “Comments and footnotes”, “Hand written”, “Miscellaneous”. Then, fonts are “placed” in these categories, so they can be easily located when necessary. The best thing about Fontonizer is that it works with fonts that aren’t currently installed on a PC. In fact, it works with fonts that are stored not only on hard-drive, but CDs, DVDs, flash-drives and External Drives.

“Even though the fonts may not be installed, you can write a word or sentence to see how it looks. If necessary, Fontonizer will automatically show a list of the same word or phrase visualized with different fonts. This way one can easily compare and find the font that is most appropriate for a certain occasion.

“Finally, Fontonizer comes with even more functions font professionals need. For example, the program performs installation /deletion /restoration of the deleted fonts. Plus, Fontonizer is capable of displaying “symbol table” of any font, even if it was deleted. With Fontonizer, professionals can experiment not only with fonts and sizes, but backgrounds as well. Fontonizer is distributed electronically over the Internet; a free demo version is available at

www.fontonizer.com/

for evaluation. The price of a single license is \$29 US Dollars for a single copy. Company Website

3 The Editor’s Keyboard

More *geometry*

In my February editorial I mentioned how I had begun to use the package *geometry* with the \LaTeX document preparation system to adjust the margins. Yes, I can hear the Microsoft *Word* users wondering why I go to these extremes. “Why don’t you just . . .” (and fill in the blank with their way of changing margins.

Even my Linux and BSD friends ask, “Why don’t you just use . . .” (and fill in the blank with one

www.fontutilities.com

Product Page:

www.fontonizer.com/

Download:

www.fontutilities.com/download/fo100.zip

Buy Link:

fontutilities.com/order.htm

That’s it for this month. 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. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click

bobclick@mindspring.com

Visit my Web site at

www.dealsguy.com

I have posted Web pages with announcements I received in 2004. Sorry they are not well organized, but what is there was a lot of work, as they all have to be edited. I have received some since then and will also post them one of these days.

of the *Word* like word processors available (for **Free** as in both **Freedom** and **Beer**) on my Debian system. Those really in the know will ask about *LyX* (an almost WYSIWYG-front-end for \LaTeX that runs under the X Window System). Finally, the more graphical oriented crowd (those who use *The GIMP*) might ask why I don’t use *Scribus* the Microsoft *Publisher* clone.

Aesthetics

There is an old World War I song, that I remember from my childhood. As the involvement of the United States in World War II increased, many World War I songs were played over the radio. Anyhow, the first line went something like this: *How are yuh gona' keep 'em down on the farm after they've see Pariee?* The point being, I just cannot go back to any word processing application after having had the pleasure of experiencing the visual effect (typography at its finest) in the documents produced by the \LaTeX / \TeX system.

I have tried *LyX* but found it wanting. That experiment was well over a year ago. The current stable version is 1.3.5, so I really should give it a try. It claims to be a *WYSIWYM* or **What You See Is What You Mean**. It has a typical graphical user interface but uses \LaTeX in the background to produce the document file. It was designed for Unix like systems so it runs natively on any of the various Unix flavors including the Mac OS X. With the *Cygwin* suite including an X server and \LaTeX *LyX* will run under Windows also.

Structured Composition

First, *structured* in the sense of *document structure*. This newsletter is an example of a document with

structure. I simply identify the headings for sections and subsections, for example, and \LaTeX takes care of font selection, size and weight of the face.

Second, *composition* is what I, the editor do. I either key the text into the source file, or I copy a text file from an e-mail message or web site. Which ever way I do it, I analyze the text for *structure* and apply appropriate structuring commands to the unstructured text that will become an article in this newsletter.

Not For Every Purpose

This particular way of putting the newsletter together for printing or posting on the web is definitely not for such things as the flyer announcing our next meeting. Holly Hawkins, our **Publicity Coordinator** produces amazing flyers. Where does she get her ideas? I am awed! I don't know what software she is using, but I suspect it is one of the several *WYSIWYG* editors available. No, the \LaTeX / \TeX *Structured Composition and Typesetting* system is not designed to be useful for such a purpose.

Fielder George Dowding
Editor and Publisher
PC NEWS

4 Friends of ACS

We thank those businesses and individuals listed below and the many others who have donated all or a portion of some of the services, materials, and time required to help make the Alaska Computer Society succeed.

AARP – resource center, classroom space, and meeting space in the Northway Mall.¹

Alaska Pacific University – General meeting room, special pricing.

Michael Ardaiz of Mad Dog Graphx – ACS PCUG logo.

Brown Bear Software – iCal program used to create the monthly event calendars.

Lewis & Lewis Computer Store – door prizes for the annual technology show and monthly meetings.

Microsoft Corporation – software for user group support functions and door prizes for monthly meetings.

Application for Membership
Alaska Computer Society — PC Users Group

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

Dues are \$25.00 per year, \$15.00 for students, seniors and the military. Please make your check payable to, the Alaska Computer Society. Thank you.

¹Ed.:The initials used to stand for “American Association of Retired Persons”. However, one does not need to be retired to join.

5 The Back Pages

The Alaska Computer Society – PC Users Group (ACS-PCUG) publishes *PC News* monthly via the Internet. This newsletter is copyright © ACS-PCUG 2003. The current edition and the archive of the newsletter may be found at the ACS-PCUG web site:

<http://www.acs-pcug.org>

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ACS Board Meetings

Board meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month at the AARP meeting room. Great effort is expended to start the meeting at 7:00 P.M. and to end the meeting before 9:00 P.M. The board meetings are open, and the board encourages members to attend.

²Replace the “{at}” in the address with the “at-sign” to contact one of the volunteers. I have mangled the address to thwart harvesting by spam-bots.

ACS PCUG Volunteers

The ACS-PCUG is a volunteer organization. The members of the board are volunteers. Nothing happens without our volunteers who make it happen. Here is the current list of volunteers, who, in addition to the board members, make things happen:

Publicity Coordinator *Publicity1{at}ACS-PCUG.org*
Holly Hawkings

Public Service Announcements *PSA1{at}ACS-PCUG.org*
Marjorie Feldberg

Publications Coordinator (Position Open)

SIG Coordinator (Position Open)

E-Mail Addresses:

1. The policy of *PC NEWS* is to make e-mail addresses accessible to human beings but inaccessible to robots.
2. Members who volunteer are assigned an e-mail address from the pool available within the *ACS-PCUG.org* domain. This is the address that will be published unless a volunteer requests a personal address be published.

The Final Word:

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