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ROM is issued
six-times
a year to
members of the
Guildford PC
User Group
All Contributions
to the Editor
Tony Hawes
(details on page 2)

ROM

Newsletter of the Guildford PC User Group

Editor's Bit

Seasons Greetings!

Here we are again, and another year has gone by and I'm one year older. I'm relatively familiar with Einstein's famous $E=MC^2$ theorem, but I have figured it out at last as to what it really means to us humans — it has taken me over 60 years to comprehend its meaning which is that the older you get, the faster time goes. So all of you who are under the sixty start worrying and those of you who are over, well it's way too late!

With help from some of the major software and hardware companies who've provided samples for review and demonstration, we've had some excellent talks and demonstrations and as usual club members have shown willing to demonstrate their particular computing expertise: Laurence Fenn (Paint Shop Pro and Nero 9), Francis Jacques (Microsoft Excel), Paul Kuzmin (Dragon Naturally Speaking), Dennis Fuller (Microsoft Access) and not forgetting Mike Bray for his bravura act with the excellent Dyson vacuum cleaner! They are all to be congratulated for their efforts in talking to us about products that they know so well (or in Mike's case not so well!).

Additional thanks also to Laurence Fenn for his expertise in maintaining our web site and Bryce McCrerrick for his secretarial duties.

A final thought: our membership is shrinking so getting more people to join our happy throng



needs to be one of our/your New Year resolutions.

Lastly, I hope you all and your families have an enjoyable and peaceful Christmas and I wish you a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Tony Hawes

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ROM is now only available as a full-colour .pdf download from the Group web page at:
www.guildfordpcusergroup.co.uk

**NEXT MEETING — Tuesday
9th December 2008 at 7.45 p.m.**

Annual Quiz Competition Night

As in previous years we have a superb range of prizes on offer (see page 2). However, the committee has decided that because of the quantity and value of the prizes the Quiz will be OPEN TO FULLY PAID-UP MEMBERS OF THE GROUP ONLY.

Francis our Treasurer will be on hand to take your subscription to enable you to participate. If you opt to join the Group by paying your subscription this month (December 2008) your membership will be valid until March 2010. In other words you'll enjoy a 15-month subscription for the price of a normal 12-month subscription and be entitled to participate in the quiz.

Spread the word and please bring a friend — Mince pies, coffee, tea & chocolate biscuits are free.

Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7.45pm at the Stoughton Youth Club and Community Centre (opposite "The Royal" — Pub) Worplesdon Road (A322), Guildford.

Forthcoming Meetings

Monday 12th January 2009 at 7.45 pm. Miles Osmaston has suggested a different format for the January meeting and he will be talking physics, and in particular about the Continuum Theory (CT). "What can CT do that the theory of General Relativity cannot?" This follows on from the successful appearance of a scientific paper he had published about CT in a learned journal.

Monday 9th February 2009 at 7.45 pm. In arrangement.

Monday 9th March 2009 at 7.45 pm. In arrangement.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries or questions about the Guildford PC User Group and its activities please contact the following members of the committee:

Chairman (and Editor)

Tony Hawes

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(this site contains many of the reviews that have appeared in ROM)

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Secretary's Notes

12th October Meeting: Dragon Naturally Speaking 10 and Dyson DC25 Ball vacuum cleaner. Paul Kuzmin showed his expertise with Nuance's Dragon Naturally Speaking 10. Starting off with a minimal voice training session, using a headset/mic connected to the audio front ports of a Acer Laptop. Paul showed how easy it was to talk to the computer and get a legible stream of spoken words to appear in a MS Word document. He showed how to format the document with different font styles, paragraphs, heading etc.

He then tried the wireless headphone option using a Plantronics wireless headset. This worked brilliantly with Paul being able to walk around the computer dictating all the while. As an experiment we asked him to get as physically far away as possible from the computer to see whether the increased range would degrade the signal received by the computer. No difference was noted and again a legible stream of text was translated into the document.

Our next request was for him to talk as quickly as possible to see whether it was possible to overload the signal processing capabilities of the program (and computer) in transcribing speech into text. Again the program coped very well indeed, there was a short delay between Paul's dictation and the result appearing on the screen, but it did appear as an almost verbatim transcription.

Overall this was a very good demonstration of Dragon Dictate 10's capabilities and Paul is to be complimented on his expertise in his use of the program.



We next had Mike Bray showing how easy it was to manoeuvre Dyson's DC25 Ball cleaner around our feet, under the tables and around the chairs. Given that this was Mike's first time in handling a ball cleaner he did remarkably well, even if he did dent a few toes during his demo. An interesting evening.

Monday 10th November Meeting. Logitech's new Z5 USB-powered speakers and Nero 9. Our meeting on Monday 10 November was in two parts. It started with Tony Hawes showing the new Logitech Z5 speakers designed for use with a laptop. These are two small Omni directional stereo speakers powered from your computer's USB connection. Being Omni directional the stereo experience fills the room. Tony demonstrated them by playing extracts from CDs and a DVD. This included a wide selection of music which included the following:

1. **Jazz:** The Jacques Loussier Trio's famous recording of Bach's Air on the G String from the album "Play Bach 2". This recording was used in the Hamlet cigar advertisements for over 35 years.
2. **Vocal 1:** Katherine Jenkins singing Pie Jesu from her new album "Sacred Arias".
3. **Vocal 2:** Elena Kats-Chernin singing "Eliza's Aria" from the "Wild Swans" ballet. "Eliza's Aria" is the quirky tune that features in the Lloyds TSB advertising campaign.
4. **Instrumental:** Alison Balsom playing the first movement of Hummel's Trumpet Concerto from her new album "Haydn and Hummel Trumpet Concertos".
5. **Orchestral/Choral:** Elgar "Coronation Ode 1902 - Land of Hope and Glory" finale. An awesome and hair-raising performance of 'Land of Hope and Glory' in its 'Coronation Ode' setting. Sonically far superior to the version sung annually at the Last Night of the Proms.
6. **DVD:** Walt Disney's "Fantasia 2000" movie. Camille Saint-Saens "Carnival of the Animals" (finale).

We were all very impressed by the quality from such small speakers. They came on the market about a month ago priced at about £60.

Nero 9. The second part of the evening consisted of a demonstration by Laurence Fenn of Nero 9, the latest version of the world's best selling digital media suite. Laurence found the installation tedious, taking over four hours. He had to download the updates from the website in order to get it to install. It has a major revamped interface. In addition to CD and DVD burning it includes a wide range of functions including video editing, media streaming, and file backup. The software can now identify and remove commercials from recorded TV programmes. Some Vista enhanced features (such as the Live TV sidebar gadget) are not yet available and will appear in an update, but as details are not given in the updates as to what is included, it could be difficult to know when they are available. Taking everything into consideration including the installation Laurence was not impressed and suggests that if you're satisfied with version 7 or 8 you should stay with it. See his review in this issue.

Competition Prizes — Thanks

Our grateful thanks to the following companies and their PR agencies for supplying such varied selection of useful and valuable prizes for this month's annual quiz competition.

1. Logitech for their hardware: Speakers, keyboards and mouse. PR Agency: Brands 2 Life.
2. Corel for their software including Paint Shop Pro Photo X2, VideoStudio Pro X2 and Painter Essentials 4. PR Agency MSL Worldwide.
3. Norton (Symantec) for copies of Norton Internet Security 2009 and Norton Anti Virus 2009. PR Agency Bite Communications.
4. Magix for Movie Edit Pro 14, MP3 Maker 14, Xtreme Photo & Graphics Designer 2. Paragon software for Paragon Hard Disk Manager 2008 Suite and Real Illusion for Crazy Talk 5. PR Agency KL Associates.

New Products



New Paragon Hard Disk Manager 2009 Suite

Paragon Software Group (PSG), the technology leader in innovative data security and data management solutions, has announced the release of Hard Disk Manager 2009 Suite. This is the All-in-One Suite to completely protect, maintain and manage your PC data. Hard Disk Manager 2009 Suite provides you with all tools you need to manage today's hard drives, including partitioning, backup, cloning, defrag, hard drive disposal, system management and system recovery.

The hard disk of a PC, laptop, notebook or PDA is the space where you store all your work. A Computer operating system picks certain pieces of data which the PC system needs for related applications or programs and then writes this data back when they are not in use. In time, this data slowly gets fragmented which can lead to loss of valuable work and the system not performing proficiently. It is vitally important therefore that hard disk management is efficient.

Paragon Hard Disk Manager 2009 Suite is a comprehensive package of functionality and is accessible from one easy to use interface. You don't need to buy and install each package individually – saving you time and money. With this programme, you can save your entire PC, including the operating system, applications, your settings and all data with easy to use backup tools.

Features include:

1. Backup/Restore - Keeping previous backups makes it easy to restore your system to a particular data and time. HDM makes both, backup and restore easy!
2. File Backup - An innovative file-level protection system allowing you to protect all files, including emails, photos, music, videos, spreadsheets and other

documents from damage through the creation of a backup copy.

3. Partitioning - Advanced tools let you control your hard drive, the number of partitions and the type of backups you may need. The software provides partitioning operations of all kinds.
4. Paragon Adaptive Restore™ - A powerful and unique technology which allows you to restore Windows Vista on a completely different hardware or even on a virtual machine.
5. Advanced Recovery CD - Paragon Recovery CD allows you to use HDM software even when your machine cannot boot. It also can be used to restore your system and data from previously created backup archive in case of system failure.

Hard Disk Manager 2009 Professional is also available. This version includes all the tools you need to manage and maintain your hard drive in one advanced toolset! The professional edition manages your system's hard drive(s) through every stage of its life-cycle: from placing a new drive into service, setting up real and secured dual boot environment, advanced partitioning without data loss, regular backups of system and data, solving any boot problems, restoring your system from bare metal state and much more.

Further details from Paragon's web site: www.paragon-software.com

Price & Availability:

Paragon Hard Disk Manager 2009 Suite is priced at £29.99 inc. and is available from Amazon.co.uk, Play.com and PC World.

Paragon Hard Disk Manager 2009 Suite Professional is available at £69.95 online from www.paragon-software.com and ESD from PX Software sales@pxsoftware.co.uk.

New Diskeeper 2009 Released

Diskeeper Corporation today preannounced its new feature set for forthcoming Diskeeper 2009 with defrag engines at highest-ever speeds and enterprise features in all workstation editions for maximum performance at the desktop level.

Diskeeper 2009 Key Features

1. Real-Time Defragmentation automatically handles performance-robbing fragmentation as it occurs. There is no need for scheduling or manual defrag.
2. I-FAAST 2.0 (Intelligent File Access Acceleration Sequencing Technology) which boosts access speed for the files most frequently used (by 10%-80%).
3. Free Space Defragmentation Engine that has been enhanced to increase file-write performance.
4. Low Free Space Defrag Engine that ensures that even when you have less than 1% free space you can still defragment your volumes.
5. Terabyte Volume Engine 2.0 which defragments volumes with hundreds of thousand and millions of files, quickly and thoroughly (1).
6. Frag Shield 2.0 that boosts reliability by automatically preventing crash-inducing fragmentation of critical system files.
7. InvisiTasking which ensures no resource conflict whatsoever while performing the above operations.
8. Titan Defrag Engine technology that has been built to defragment multi-terabyte volumes even faster and more thoroughly than ever before. Titan is the only defrag solution powerful enough to handle volumes at 10–20 plus terabytes (2).
9. MOM/SCOM integration. Microsoft Operations Manager (MOM) and Systems Center Operations Manager (SCOM) allow monitoring and management of computers interconnected by networks. Diskeeper provides MOM/SCOM with numerous alerts, reports and the ability to manage and control product settings and configurations.

Notes:

- (1) In all Diskeeper Pro Premier editions.
- (2) Enterprise Server edition only

Magix Website Maker 2.0

Reviewed by Laurence Fenn

Introduction

As a web designer myself, I could say building a website is very complicated and takes years of experience to achieve. Actually with many site building software solutions out on the market it can be very easy and you won't need to have any knowledge of HTML, or Hypertext Markup Language. Word processors usually have an option to publish in the HTML format, and whilst it doesn't produce the best coding possible, even Microsoft Word can do the job.

Using Magix Website Maker 2.0 is different. Installation is minimal to say the least. Most of your website is designed online, which means you won't have to update the software and your work is uploaded as you go. This means when you publish your finished masterpiece it will be very quick. If you still use a dial up connection (and not everyone has broadband) then you're going to have to work very slowly. Sites are created from templates and there are a range to choose from, with each design offering a number of layouts and different page types.

Registering

Registering was not very straightforward. I added my email address, choose a password and typed in the activation code, but they also wanted my full address, telephone number and date of birth. When I entered them the web page said that I had already registered, which I hadn't. When I tried the already registered option, it still required my name and address and date of birth. I had no intention of giving all my personal details just to run a program online so after putting dummy details in I was finally able to get to the interface. The web site also sends an email with your login details. When you run the program from the shortcut you sign on and you'll be confronted with an interface that gives you 8 options in 3 sections



1. Your Website – MAGIX Website Maker (This will bring up the templates), Website Control Centre (which includes your email set-up).
2. Photos, Video and Music – MAGIX Photo Manager 2007, MAGIX Xtreme Photo Designer 6, MAGIX Movie Edit Pro 11 silver, Mufin Music Finder. None of these programs are installed during the setup. They must be installed from the CD separately.
3. It's Easy – Watch the tutorial (a step by step clear interactive instructions on how to edit, build and put effects on to your web pages), open online help.

Flash Application

The service uses a Flash application for the site building and to create your site. This means your site will have lots of bells and whistles and look great, but will take a bit longer to load, and probably won't be indexed by search engines. With Google and the like, they like to be able to read the content, looking for keywords and if your site is made of a flash file, it won't be able to read the text contained inside.



Template Choice

I selected a template and tried to change a picture. To do this, you have to go to objects, My Media, Pictures then click on the Upload button. You are then asked which upload method to use, one at a time or express, where you upload several pictures at once. After clicking OK nothing happened. I tried again, and

then tried to use Internet Explorer (in case there was some incompatibility with Firefox). Again nothing happened, so I had to go into the Internet settings and switch off the pop up blocker. When I tried this time a little window appeared asking me to browse for the picture. As it used the standard open file dialog, there was no preview for the files initially (you have to change the view to get them), so I had to remember the file name. I selected a gif file and it uploaded but nothing appeared in the list of files. I tried with a jpg file and that appeared. I then noticed that the browse dialog did not allow gif files. There are three picture formats used on web sites, PNG, JPG and GIF, but MAGIX seem to think only JPGs will do. I was trying to build a version of the ROM web site using this software, but as most of the graphics are gif files, I could not do this. If the program told me that it didn't accept gifs, instead of just letting me upload it and then ignoring the file, then that would have been better. I have created Flash files before using other software and imported gif files without any problems, so it's not the format that is preventing me from doing this.

Website Templates

There are quite a few website templates to choose from but they are quite complex. A host of drag and drop frames, vector shapes, backgrounds, headers, footers, impressive text animation, and creative flash animation are also available, but as you are using this to create your own website, you think they would have made it easy for you to use your own graphics. In some software you could right hand click on the image and simply choose to replace it, but as this is a Flash program running in a browser window, you only get the Flash settings dialog. Website Maker felt a bit clunky and awkward, although it did have a glossy sheen that looked good at first glance.

The layouts are over-designed and too specific, making them unsuitable for most people's needs. Although an entirely empty template is provided, that will be too daunting for most users who'd choose this kind of product, and some simpler, smarter templates should have been included. The interface is a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) environment so you know that whatever you do in the design stage will be translated exactly to your website. It helps when you add video as you upload a video file to your web space, drag it onto your site and a player is created around the file automatically.

The 'export' function merely spits out code for linking to the Flash website that you create on the Magix server, rather than exporting your actual website in a format you could tweak. The new search engine optimisation (SEO) feature lets you add keywords and de-

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scriptions in meta tags, but these are rarely used by search engines.

The Flash application is also much less responsive than a plain webpage. Often elements became editable only two or three seconds after I selected them. Editing text was fine to select the text, but having to search to find the options to change the font or size, instead of having the controls on screen was annoying.

If you need to learn a few tricks of the trade or just swap some ideas then you can join the Magix Knowledge Community via Live Chat, accessible directly from the online application

On completion of your website just one click and Magix will publish your website to the world giving you a massive 5GB of space free for the first year after which there is a nominal fee. You'll need to pay a

monthly fee after one year to keep your site on the server so this is not going to help if you've just bought a domain with web space and were looking for some software to design a website.

Another thing that's missing is domain name registration. By default, your website is placed online at yourname.magix.net/website/. If you want your own domain (yourname.com), that'll come in at an extra £1.29 per month, or £1.49 with an email address, which sounds cheap until you realise that's twice the price many domain resellers charge. You also need to be aware that Website Maker 2.0 is a one-year purchase: after the first 12 months, there's a monthly fee for keeping your site online.

Building a decent website has never been the easiest of tasks. Site-building software can make things easier but it

often means sacrificing certain key elements of the web-building process in order to work. The previous version of Magix Website Maker won a Web User Gold Award but I think the competition couldn't have been up to much at that time. I found it frustrating to use and I know how to design a web site from scratch. Of course, this could have been my problem and the software would be easier to use by a novice, but I found the interface could have been simpler and certainly the restriction on files types was something that could have been avoided.

System Requirements :

600 MHz processor, or higher

64 MB RAM, or higher (128 MB recommended)

Min. free hard disk space: 50 MB

Graphics card: Min. resolution 1024 x 768 with 16-bit high-colour.

16-bit sound card, CD-ROM drive, compatible mouse.

Operating system: Windows 2000/XP/Vista.

Internet

Internet access: Minimum DSL (768 KB)

Internet browser: Microsoft Internet Explorer min. version 6.0 with Adobe® Flash® Player version 7.0 or higher (version 8 recommended) and Java 2 Runtime Environment version 1.42 or higher (both available free of charge) with JavaScript and Cookies activated (corresponds with the standard settings).

Pricing and Availability

Amazon.co.uk for £27. 19 inc VAT and free delivery



Editing the Website

Logitech K5 USB-Powered Speakers

by Tony Hawes

Logitech's new Z5 USB-powered speakers. We had a demo of these at our November meeting using your editor's laptop and for those of you who weren't present a brief resume about these new speakers.

Product Description

The speakers built into laptop computers are not enough to experience audio the way it was meant to be enjoyed. Using an innovative speaker technology, the Logitech Z-5 Omni directional speakers are USB-powered speakers designed for Mac and PC use to feature Omni directional acoustics – providing great sound at a consistent level,



no matter where you are in the room. And because they are connected via USB,

there's no bulky power adapter so they are easy to setup and can be moved from room to room.

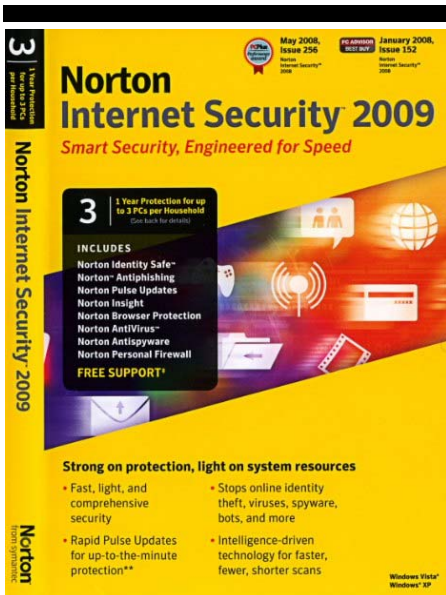
Key Features

- Omni directional acoustic technology provides great audio at a consistent level anywhere in the room by radiating sound more uniformly.
- USB Connectivity delivers pure digital audio that's easy to setup and delivers crisp, clean sound.
- Mac and PC compatibility allows you the flexibility to use with any computer.
- Remote control lets you wirelessly navi-

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Norton Internet Security 2009

Reviewed by Tony Hawes



As a long-time user of Symantec products from the days when Peter Norton was one of the 'kings' of software utilities (Peter Norton sold his company to Symantec in 1990). However, his name lives on in the Symantec range of security utilities which are still sold to this day.

A couple of years ago, I reviewed an earlier version of Norton Internet Security (NIS) and was reasonably happy with its capabilities although I commented at the time that NIS's competitors, in particular McAfee, had the edge with better functionality and was less of a hit on the computer's processes. I got the impression that like a geriatric human, NIS performed slower and slower every year as each new version was launched. My feeling was that each time a new or upgraded version was launched the updates had just been bolted on to an already aging core.

This meant that NIS was getting a reputation as an aging and creaking utility that wasn't keeping up with its competitors and needed a seriously make-over to slim down and speed up what should have been a cracker of a program. I wasn't the only one who commented on these failings as other computer magazine reviewers had observed similar problems in their reviews which clearly showed that things were not all rosy with NIS.

Well Symantec must have been listening because they have just released the 2009 version of NIS with claims that it is a much improved latest version of NIS in the form of Norton Internet Security 2009.

Documentation

Assuming you've purchased the jewel-case boxed version the first thing that strikes you when you open the case is the lack of documentation because all that's there apart from a CD is a single printed

inlay card (7in x 4½in) in size (see left). Earlier versions were far more generous. For example Norton Internet Security 2004 came with a printed 224-page User's Guide/Manual, whilst Norton Internet Security 2007 came with a printed 34-page User's Guide. So corners have been cut with regard to what the user is expected to be able to refer to should he run into trouble, which for novices or first time users is not a good thing.

Installation

Installation is straightforward. You insert the CD into a drive. It auto runs bringing up the box, with the license agreement. Tick the 'I accept' box and type in the product key when prompted. The program suggests where it should be installed or you can of course choose your own location, should you so wish. I chose the default location and within a couple of minutes I was up and running. Which in my book is very fast indeed.

With the installation complete, the program launches the main interface. Here the options for the basic control of the software are shown. To access help for the various options, its only necessary to hover the mouse over an information icon, for easy access to an extensive help section.

In Use

As mentioned in the last issue of ROM Norton Internet Security 2009 and Norton AntiVirus 2009 have been designed with what Symantec term a "zero-impact" performance goal, with over 300 improvements that span nearly every aspect of the product, from the scanning engine to the user interface. So I was interested to see how these improvements worked in practice. We know the installation was quick as mentioned above.

The Other new Features:

- Simplified user interface. As can be seen from the screen shots the new UI provides easier access to detailed configuration settings and the ability to track detection and performance status.
- Silent mode — suspends alerts and updates automatically to avoid interrupting or slowing activities such as games, movies or presentations.
- Norton Identity Safe — keeps your identity safer than ever when you buy, bank,

browse and game online

- Home Networking feature — allows users to easily view and manage devices on their home network
- AntiBot features — prevents bots from taking control of your PC
- Contributing to the Norton Community together with Norton Insight allows NIS 2009 to avoid scanning any files that are commonly found on most computers and statistically determined to be trusted. Norton Insight is a new feature in the 2009 version of NIS. What it does according to Symantec is "increase computer performance by identifying trusted files that do not require scanning," thereby allowing faster speeds when performing system scans. When you run your first full system scan you'll find the Norton Insight scan takes some time, but this is a one-time operation and all subsequent scans are very much quicker. This feature is a useful and innovative part of the NIS 2009 package.

Virus and Trojan Detection

I have a couple of files that I know are very 'iffy' one of which I know contains a 'Trojan' and should be detected by a good Anti-Virus package. Norton did well and detected the infected file as shown in the screen shot on the next page. It also detected tracking cookies, but as these are part of most user's normal everyday browsing and of low risk, I ticked the box for tracking cookies to be ignored by the program. However if you are paranoid you can let Norton advise you whether you want to remove these cookies, ignore them or to alert you each time they are detected.

Secure Firewall

The firewall seemed to work fine. I logged on to the Gibson Research Centre testing site (GRC.com) because they have the ability to send probing messages to your computer to assess whether your firewall is blocking probing attacks or not. In each case, the Norton firewall blocked all attempts by GRC to access the computer. So, I think one can say that this does in fact, work and works well. See the screen-shot on the next page.

All these new features/items give the impression that they work very well, although how one evaluates the "Silent Mode" as being in use was very hard to determine as it's 'silent'! but the functionality of all the features both new and old seem much quicker and in use the whole package just appears slicker and more sprightly than the features of the earlier versions it replaces or upgrades.

Conclusion

Norton Internet Security 2009 is a considerable improvement over its predecessors. Symantec has at last got its act together with the

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result that NIS 2009 is leaner, quicker and smarter. For a home computer user NIS 2009 delivers what it promises, which makes it a recommended product in my book.

As a final thought the NIS 2009 licence permits installation on up to three computers in a home environment.

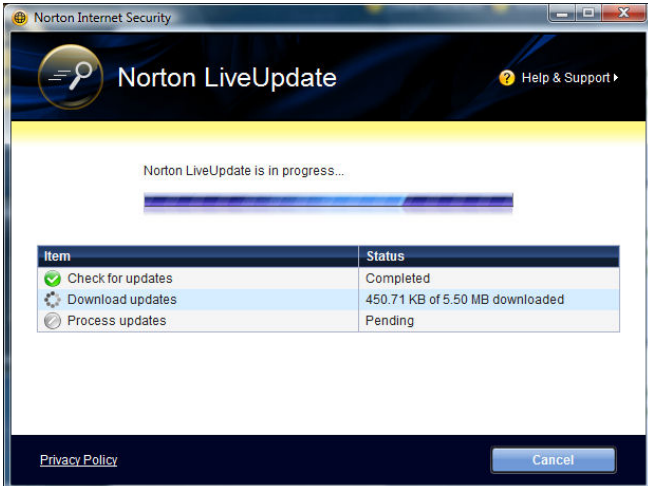
Pricing and Availability

The boxed full version is currently available from Amazon.co.uk for only £24.97 (which is half price). An upgrade from previous versions is available from Amazon too, but bizarrely its being sold at £39.13!

If not convinced whether you should use NIS 2009 or not, like all good software NIS 2009 is available as a downloadable 15-day

free trial. So I strongly recommend you use Symantec's 15 day free trial first! You are not committed and if at the end of the trial period you find it suits you, you can go ahead and buy it there and then using your credit card or from one of the high Street or Internet dealers.

Further information here: www.norton.com.



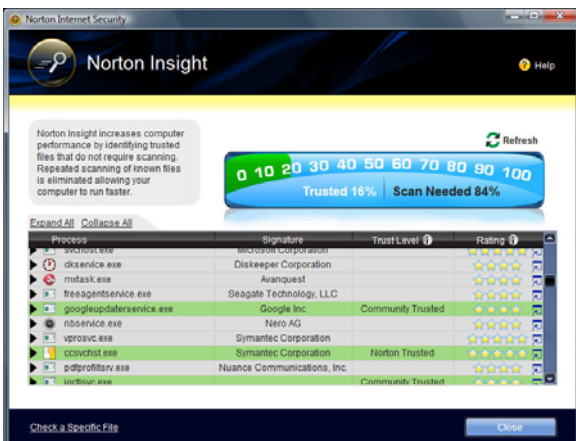
LiveUpdate checking for updates



NIS 2009 overview with System & Norton Usage shown on the left.



Settings shows a comprehensive overview of what's happening



Norton Insight in action

Shields UP! is checking **YOUR** computer's Internet connection security . . . currently located at IP:

Please Stand By . . .

- 1 Attempting connection to your computer. . . Shields UP! is now attempting to contact the Hidden Internet Server within your PC. It is likely that no one has told you that your own personal computer may now be functioning as an Internet Server with neither your knowledge nor your permission. And that it may be serving up all or many of your personal files for reading, writing, modification and even deletion by anyone, anywhere, on the Internet!
- 2 Your Internet port 139 does not appear to exist! One or more ports on this system are operating in FULL STEALTH MODE! Standard Internet behavior requires port connection attempts to be answered with a success or refusal response. Therefore, only an attempt to connect to a nonexistent computer results in no response of either kind. **BUT YOUR computer has DELIBERATELY CHOSEN NOT TO RESPOND** (that's very cool!) which represents advanced computer and port stealthing capabilities. A machine configured in this fashion is well hardened to Internet NetBIOS attack and intrusion.
- 3 Unable to connect with NetBIOS to your computer. All attempts to get any information from your computer have FAILED. (This is very uncommon for a Windows networking-based PC.) Relative to vulnerabilities from Windows networking, this computer appears to be **VERY SECURE** since it is **NOT exposing ANY** of its internal NetBIOS networking protocol over the Internet.

NIS 2009 Firewall is working exceedingly well — from GRC's Shields UP! test site



Norton AntiVirus detects a nasty Trojan



Norton AntiVirus background scan (Left). Want to use Identity Safe? (Right).

Nero 9 Suite

Reviewed by Laurence Fenn

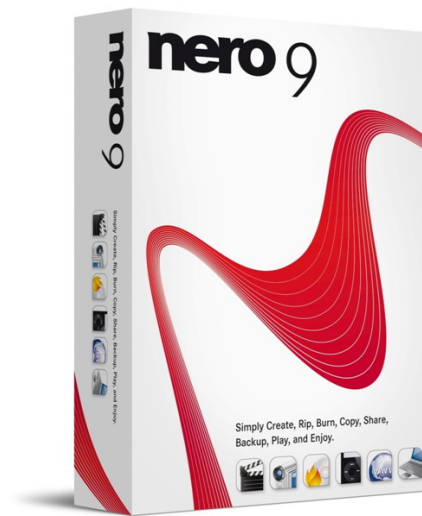
Introduction

The Nero Suite has grown in the last few years from just the CD/DVD burning program to playing, importing, and manipulating video and audio, including HD. A lite version was usually included whenever you bought a CD/DVD writer, but this has been renamed as the Essentials version. The full program comes on a DVD and takes over 3GB of hard disc space. I had tremendous problems with the installation of the software. I had version 7 on the machine I was using to review the software and had to remove that before trying to install version 9. The installation constantly failed at 17% and so I downloaded the update (9.0.4.4c at the time). I say update, but it includes all the programs, yet was only 370Mb in size. It also requires you to uninstall any previous version being installing the new one. After half an hour it had only done 15%, and 23% by the full hour. It was nearly four hours until it reached 100%. At the end of the install I clicked on the exit button and it took 4 minutes before the window disappeared.

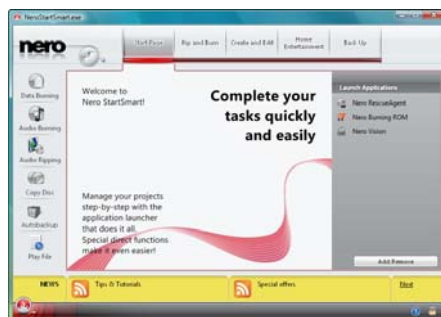
Usually at the end of the install you get the opportunity to associate file types with the program, so you can double click on a file in Windows Explorer to launch the file in a particular program. As I already have a suitable audio player/editor, graphics editor/viewer I normally unclick all the choices. This screen has been removed from the installation process, so Nero takes over playing all your video files, audio files and pictures. I later discovered that the file associations for avi, wav, bmp, and jpg to name a few had been overtaken, and when you uninstall the software (which took over an hour) the associations are not returned. I had to spend ten minutes re-associating the file types and cleaning up the remains of the program (which were still left after using Nero's clean up tool available from their web site).

Nero 9 tries to install a browser toolbar, Ask.com and despite clicking to unselect the option it was still installed. This may be due to the buggy version of the software but as I was using an update this should have been fixed. Several autoplay entries were also wrong, with RESOURCE_ID being displayed instead of the program name.

Apart from removing 'Ultra' from the title, the while-you-wait animation which appears every time you launch a program now has Bezier waves, and the BackItUp software is a separate, optional install, included on the disc. When I tried to install this program and chose the custom install option, I got items marked IDS_UNIT_APP_NAME listed and it took



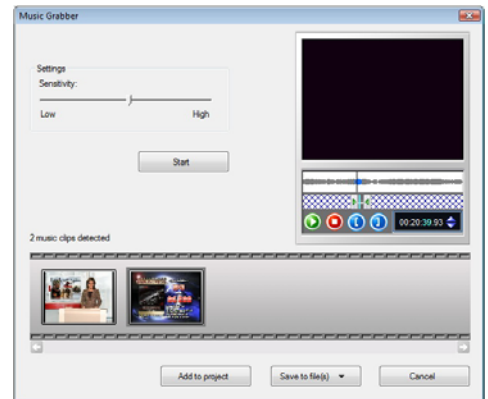
15 minutes to install. When I went to the Nero Control Centre, where you can check the versions of the software and find updates, the BackItUp program was not included, and I couldn't find any links to the program on the Start Menu. Downloading and running the latest update (or new version 4.0.38.0.c) installed the program. The backup program cannot lock a partition being used by another program, so you cannot backup your system drive. It cannot lock a system partition used by a Windows OS either, so if you only have one hard disc with one drive letter, as several users do, that means you can never back it up using this software.



Nero StartSmart

The Nero StartSmart application launch centre has had a little revamp with new entries for playing files (audio and video), as well as for the new AutoBackup background backup function. Certain requirements for this part of the suite are not checked when you install as NeroStart needs Microsoft .Net Framework 3.0. Only after running the program and trying to play some files did a message pop up and tell me this. This is a 50MB from Microsoft and maybe included on the DVD, but not in the update files.

The help files are still not included in the program. Links are made to what look like pdf manuals, but these are one page files saying you need to go to the web site to



Nero Music Grabber

download them. This has always frustrated me and I don't know of any other software manufacturer that does not include help files with their program.

The new features mentioned in the reviewer's guide sound great, but are tricky to find in the software itself. The ability to save audio tracks from videos direct to MP3 to be included in your music library is a case in point. You have to run Nero Vision and load the video file with the audio you want to save. Then you have to choose to edit the video, and a speaker icon will become active. This is the Music Grabber function, which then scans the video for music. Any music found can be saved as a WAV or MP3 file, but with no options on the format or bit rate. The MP3 bit rate is set when you rip an audio CD using SmartStart, but the options are just Low, Medium or High, with no actual figures. I later discovered that the High setting is 192kbps.

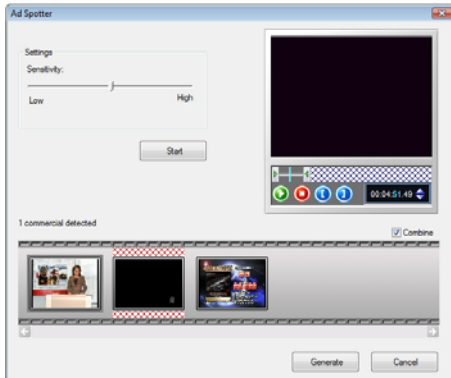
On the subject of ripping CDs, the audio CD ripper uses the GraceNotes database to get cover art, artist, album and track names. Whilst it did detect an imported CD of Yellow Magic Orchestra, an electronics group from the 80s, it took 12 and a half minutes to rip the 9 tracks to mp3 files. Media Player 11 (which uses a different database but still found the album) took six minutes to rip at the same bit rate. NeroShowTime shows a small picture of the cover it has downloaded when you play the files but it does not read the embedded pictures in mp3 files (or indeed embed them itself). Music is played fine but there are no visualisations. Media Player has many visualisations and can display the art

Ad Spotter boasts that you can watch pre-recorded shows without the commercials, and the review notes give the impression that you can switch this feature on and just watch the video without the ads. What you have to do is again load the footage into Nero Vision, choose to edit the video and click on the Ad Spotter icon. It can then detect the commercials in the video recording. They are divided into individual clips so you then delete them and re-save the video without the adverts.

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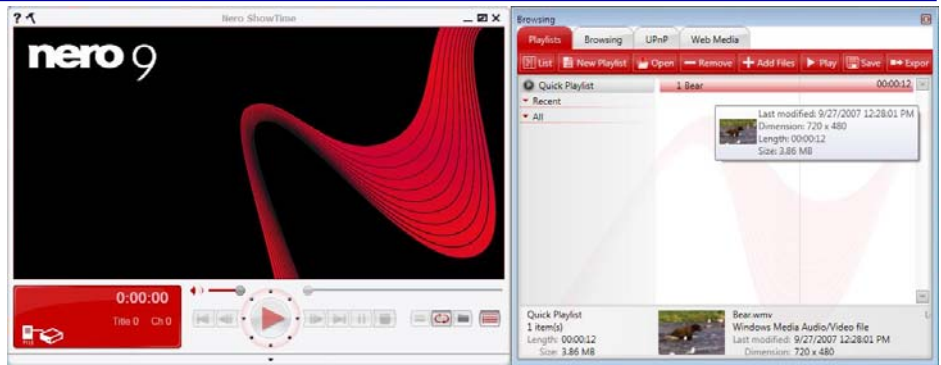
Using a short recording from a commercial channel it detected all the adverts individually, along with the channel logo and the 'sponsored by' clip at the beginning and end of the commercial break. Deleting all of them and rejoining the video seems to be a lot of work and I'm sure it would be easier to fast forward through them. On one of my old VHS machines there is an advert



Nero Ad Spotter

spotter feature, and it just fast forwards through the ads when it finds them.

Photosnap is a simple photo-editing tool that allows non-technical users to perform the most common retouching tasks – cropping, fixing red eye, and so on – with a couple of clicks. I tried it with a simply picture of my niece's dog, who had red eye and it was fiddly trying to select the area on the picture. It didn't remove the red eye but made it green and I think if you are serious about fixing your pictures you would use a



Nero ShowTime

graphics program you already have on your PC.

A new feature is Nero Live, TV-watching software, which turns your PC into a DVR. To use Nero Live, your PC requires a TV tuner, whether in the form of an add-in card or the simpler USB type. The guide says it can support up to four tuners, which is a bit excessive as I doubt anyone would have more than one. A Windows Vista sidebar gadget is available for mini-TV display, but has not been released. Searching the Nero website eventually uncovered this message: "In an effort to provide customers with reliable applications and features, Nero will provide the Nero Live Gadget feature to Nero 9 customers with the next FREE version update in November. Please check the following website regularly for next free update coming soon." To date I have seen nothing of this program, not even a screenshot and as I don't have a TV tuner

on my PC it wouldn't work if the software was installed. No details of what is included in the updates are given so if it was released I wouldn't know it was included in the update before downloading it.

Previous versions of Nero had many of the features of Nero 9 in some form, but you could choose to not install them. The whole process took a few minutes and you could make sure that your file associations were not changed. The new version does not install properly, takes far too long and mucks up your PC even after being uninstalled. I would not recommend this software to anyone, whether they had a previous version or not. The documentation is not included with the program and the web site doesn't give many details as to what the updates fix (and the updates do come quite often).

Pricing and Availability

Amazon.co.uk for £33.97 inc VAT and free delivery.

New From Doro

by Tony Hawes

The Swedish firm Doro is a new name to me. But it turns out that Doro AB, to give it full Swedish title is a large electronics group whose principle activities are to develop, manufacture and market communications equipment, such as telephone instruments, cordless telephones, switchboards, telephone answering machines and other equipment. The Group operates in three main product segments: Home Electronics, Care Electronics and Business Electronics. Home Electronics consists of home telephones, baby monitors and walkie-talkies, Care Electronics comprises phones, remote controls, ring-tone amplifiers to help senior citizens, and Business Electronics serves professional users. The Group operates in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Australia, Hong Kong and Poland.

Members will recall that at the November meeting of the Group we handed out a brochure listing the full range of Doro's products available on the UK market. Since then I've been looking at two of their products

with general appeal: their HandleEasy 328gsm mobile phone and wt96 pro high-performance Walkie-talkie/pmr.

Doro HandleEasy 328gsm Mobile Phone

- key Features:
- Unlocked to work on any network
- Slim Design
- Soft touch coating
- Big Buttons
- 4 Direct Memories
- Large, easy to read display (white on a black background)
- User-friendly keypad large, clear rubberized buttons
- Built-in speakerphone
- Receive SMS text messages
- 15 Position combined caller ID/redial log
- 9 Polyphonic ring tones
- Vibrating alert
- Backlit keypad and display

- Adjustable handset and speakerphone volume
- 50 Phonebook Memories
- Key lock
- Call timer
- Ear hook compatible

Specifications

- Display: Transflective Negative LCD
- Tri Band GSM 900/1800/1900
- 100 Memory phone Book
- SMS Memory Capacity: 50
- Caller ID Memory: 15
- Battery: Li-ion 3.7V 700 mAh
- Standby Time: up to 200 Hrs
- Talk Time: up to 140 Min
- Size: 135 x 58 x 16 mm
- Internal Antenna
- Backlit Keypad
- Keypad Lock

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- Weight: 111g

This phone is aimed at the elderly and / or those with physical problems and is listed in the Doro catalogue under the 'Doro Care' range created by Doro for just



The Doro HandleEasy 328gsm with supplied earphone mic (left) and carry strap (right). Display shows phonebook entries.



The Doro HandleEasy 328gsm compared with a current Sony Ericsson mobile and (right) four one-touch keys with Home number

that segment of the market.

Fundamentally the Doro HandleEasy is an easy to use mobile phone for when you simply want to make and receive calls which has had all the non essential and unnecessary regular mobile phone functions stripped out to ensure the phone is as simple as possible to use.

With its distinctive big buttons is a scaled-down mobile phone that's easy to hold and simple to use. It's been designed for people who just want a phone to make and receive phone calls, who prefer mobile phones with few functions and that are easy to use. Doro's Handle Easy is however not completely lacking features, but provides the most important and relevant ones.

It has four direct memory buttons labelled A to D and a large keypad and display to make dialling easier, a white on black screen for better clarity when reading the display and contrasting colours to enable the buttons to be more clearly defined. It also comes with an easily activated speakerphone for added convenience and a vibrating ringer to alert the hard of hearing of incoming calls. It can receive incoming SMS text messages, but can't send them. It's also unlocked so will work on any net-

work.

In use

I simply charged it up for the recommended 24-hour first charge, lifted out the battery, inserted my VirginMedia SIM card replaced the battery and switched it on. It worked first time and logged me into Virgin. My sim card was read and all my phone-book entries were there, all that was necessary to make a call was to press the menu button, scroll the up or down button to the required name and number and press the connect button. It was easy.

Entering names and numbers into the four large A, B, C and D buttons was simple, for the not particularly dextrous, these large buttons are an absolute boon when needing to call the most important numbers in your life.

Retrieving missed calls and was simplicity, as was scrolling though the last 15-dialled numbers to re-make a call.

It comes with a plug-in earphone mic so conversations can be made without having to hold the phone to your ear all the time. It has a large capacity battery and in normal use I would expect it to run for three to four days without needing to be recharged.

Conclusion

Pros: The Doro Handle Easy 328 is one of the most basic and easy to use mobile phones available and is ideal for the granies or granddads in your family who find the modern mini-mobiles with all their bells and whistles so loved by their teenage adherents far too intimidating and difficult to use. For the advanced in years the large buttons and display are a joy to use.

Cons: It's not able to send SMS messages. At £99 or so it's very expensive.

Pricing and Availability

Various outlets at £99.99 inc VAT.

DORO WT96 PRO HIGH-PERFORMANCE WALKIE-TALKIE/PMR

The second item from Doro is the wt96 pro from their Walkie-talkie range.

The Two Way Radio WT96 ,professional pmr offers free, long-range communication for demanding environments. The water-resistant case features a durable, rubberized grip, and there is a vibrating signal for use in noisy environments. No license or sub-



scriber fees required.

Opening the box there was one immediate disappointment in that the rechargeable NiMH AA batteries supplied were of only 600 mA capacity. Given that when you want to purchase AA rechargeable batteries for your battery driven electronic devices, you'll be offered batteries with a capacity of around 2000-2500 mA, so to supply small-capacity 600 mA rechargeables is a little mean.

As the specification says: This professional



Box Contents: 2 Handsets, 2 Charger pods, 2 headsets, 8 rechargeable NiMH AA batteries, Manual

Functions	
Water-resistant	Key tone
Rubberized grip	Automatic squelch
Auto channel scan	5 calling tones
Vibrating alert	Monitor mode
8 Selectable channels	3 VOX settings
38 sub codes	Roger beep
83 DCS codes	Backlit LCD display
Channel memory	Auto power save
Channel lock	Low battery indicator
Dual channel monitor	Headset outlet
8 volume control levels	Headset.
Detachable belt clip	Battery charger
Rechargeable NiMH batteries	
Range of up to 14 km depending on topographical environment.	

pmr offers free, long-range communication for demanding environments. The water-resistant case features a durable, rubberized grip, and there is a vibrating signal for use in noisy

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environments. No licence or subscriber fees required.

In Use

I charged up the batteries, scanned all the available channels and sub-channels to locate any transmitting channels. Fleet, or at least my house which is about a mile from the town centre was an oasis of quietness because there was nothing to be heard. I selected channel number 1 on both handsets and with my wife listening out in our ground-floor kitchen I went for a walk in the local area. Topographically my local area is flat, with open spaces and houses all around, so it was a sort of 'normal' test environment.

Signals were 'loud and clear' up to around 200-yards, but as I walked further away with more and more houses between the handset I was carrying and the one manned by my wife in the kitchen, the signal deteriorated badly. Driving my car a couple of miles south to the top of Folly Hill which is about 600ft above sea level, I was audible to my wife and vice-versa and it was possible to chat to each other, but remember this is not a 'regular' conversation mode and only one can talk at a time. However being higher also meant that I was receiving RT traffic (interference) from the surrounding area. I was picking up conversations, orders etc from a depot in Farnborough or Aldershot which is about three miles away, which I reckon is good. As to extreme range: whilst I was on the top of Folly Hill I heard someone talking about leaf-clearing in Basingstoke, which is twelve miles away as the crow flies, which is very good, but of course once one returned to ground level in a common suburban environment range was reduced to just a few hundreds of yards maximum.

Sub-Channels & CTCSS

CTCSS sub-channels can be used for selective calling within the same channel. To enable communication, the same sub-

channel and type must be used on both handsets. This is simple: press the receive CTCSS key, Select the desired sub-channel (CTCSS 0-38) and press the press to talk button to confirm.

Other Self-explanatory Features:

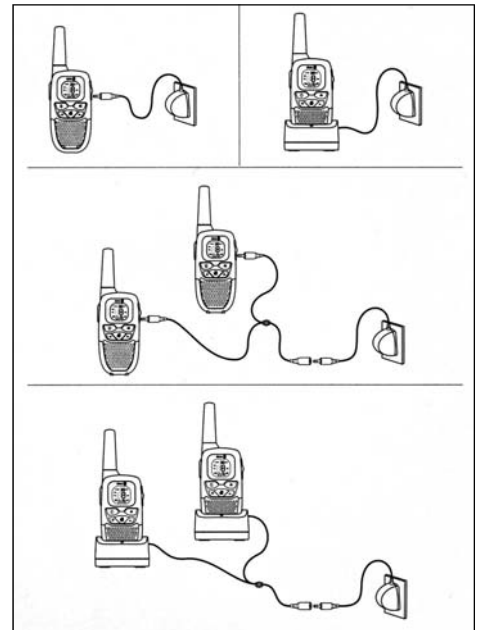
- Voice Control (VOX). Transmission is activated by voice or other sounds without using the PTT button.
- Call Melody. Call tone to alert a listener that you are about to talk. Five different melodies are available.
- Vibrator. Can be used together with or instead of a call tone.
- Monitor function. Useful in weak signal areas to locate any other signals being transmitted on the active channel.
- Roger Beep. When activated a beep tone is sent when you release the PTT button to remind the other person that you have finished transmitting.
- Dual channel monitoring. Enables you to listen to a second channel whilst communicating on the main channel.

Conclusion

Having used Motorola handsets in a previous work environment I was impressed with the Doro wt96 pro. It had some features not available with the Motorola kit I'd used professionally before and the Doro has my thumbs-up.

Pricing and Availability

A supplier on Amazon.co.uk has it listed at £82 inc VAT and delivery.



The versatile charging possibilities

CTCSS — What is it?

Continuous Tone-Coded Squelch System or CTCSS is a circuit that is used to reduce the annoyance of listening to other users on a shared two-way radio communications channel. Where more than one user group is on the same channel, (called co-channel users,) CTCSS filters out other users if they are using a different CTCSS tone or no CTCSS.

Instead of turning on the receive audio for any signal, the two-way radio receiver's audio turns on only in the presence of a signal AND the correct tone. This is akin to the use of a lock on a door. A carrier squelch or noise squelch receiver is unlocked and will let any signal in. A receiver with CTCSS locks out all signals except ones encoded with the correct tone. CTCSS can be regarded as a form of in-band signalling.

Saving Money with Your Computer

By Andrew Taylor (Ampers)

If you have a Windows computer, running Windows XP, think carefully before deciding to upgrade to Vista. This may incur more expense upgrading your hardware. And, in addition, many companies are refusing to move over to Vista for a lot of other reasons, too numerous and inappropriate, for this article on saving money. You can find more by Googling "Microsoft Vista" (without the quotes).

I want to talk here about another option for your computer.

There are three basic operating systems used on Micro Computers. The Mac OS X, Windows and Linux. Both OS X and Windows are closed systems and the respective companies impose their ideas of how you must work upon you. Linux, however, is "Open Source" and allows you to run your computer environment the way you want to. In addition OS X and Windows cost money to buy or to upgrade. You do not realise it but these costs are programmed into the price of your new computer.

"Open Source" means, generally, that not only is the software free, but the source code is provided, and you are free to alter the code, recompile it, and share your new version with your friends, as long as you do not then charge a fee. It's called "copyleft" and recently a judge upheld the term in law.

Who uses Linux? There are so many organisations, I will just mention three. Citroen are moving 250 servers and 20,000 Desktops from Windows to SuSE Linux. The French Government are moving over to

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Linux and recently 70,000 Gendarmes' desktops are moving to Ubuntu Linux. It was the Gendarmes who were my inspiration for this blog as it was they who used this method to bring all their people over to Linux programs. Then there is the Spanish Government moving over to Linux and are in the process of moving 500,000 educational PCs over to Ubuntu Linux.

Apart from Linux being more secure, nothing can be done of a serious nature without using passwords, and you have to give express permission before any software can be loaded. No point in writing deadly malware for Linux, the writer would have to find the passwords for each computer the writer was trying to infect! In addition, Linux is a perfect operating system for use on a network as it is so much more secure than anything else. I never used Windows without a firewall or anti-virus package. *I don't bother with either with Linux.*

At this stage I should mention that Linux can be run on both a PC and a Mac.

I chose Ubuntu Linux as it seems one of the easiest to handle for a Windows or Mac User – however, in the past I have experimented with other flavours including SuSE mentioned above.

Before I go into how to set up your computer, I would like to mention that there has been a lot of talk about the "Command Line" which frightens people. I have been using Ubuntu for six months now and I can assure you that most people never have to use the command line. Ubuntu is graphical, like Windows. Did you know Windows also has a command line? To see it in Windows, press the start button and you should see the "Run" button at around the middle on the right. Press this and in the box type: cmd. The black Command box will open in a window (type exit to close the window). But you never use it, right? Of course, this is usually used, like the command line in Linux, by the system administrator or one of your more geekish friends.

The trick for a successful move to Linux is simple, download the applications programs that work, and look, the same and are free with both Linux and Windows. Use these in Windows first – until you are familiar with them. Only then should you download Linux. If you commit yourself to using Linux today, you will only actually download the operating system after at least a six months period of familiarising yourself with the following programs.

To start to prepare for Linux.....

Internet Explorer – Download Mozilla Firefox, it's a better, safer alternative, with thousands of add-ins to make the browser perform the way you want it to. Load this up first and get to know it for a few months. You will love it. It's free.

Then, and only then...

Microsoft Office - or whatever other word processor you use. Download **Open Office** and use that for a few more months. It has a Word Processor, Spreadsheet and Presentations programs, and more applications. It's free. Get to know it as well as you know Microsoft Office.

Then, and only then...

Outlook - finally, you will need an email program that also works on both. Download **Mozilla Thunderbird**. It handles email and newsgroups. Like Firefox it also has add-ins to enable you to make it run the way you want it to. And, yes, it is also free.

And do you run **Photoshop** for your photographs? Download **The Gimp** it is also free. It is totally different in operation to Photoshop so you may want to run them both simultaneously until you feel at ease with it. But it is worth the effort as it does almost everything that Photoshop does and it is improving with each version. **Google Picasa** version 3 is now available for Linux and is superb for organising photos and for cropping, retouching and exporting via email or to their web depository or to photo companies to print proper photos for you. In addition, it allows you to change your picture by adding coloured tones, sepia, or black and white. Also you can sharpen, put in a changeable soft focus lens effect and much more.

Before I go on, let me mention the Adobe CS suite. Now over £2000 with VAT. In Linux you can use **The Gimp** instead of **Photoshop**, **Scribus** instead of **In-Design** and **Inkscape** instead of **Illustrator**. Apart from The Gimp, these programs are no way near as good as their Adobe counterparts; but for home users who want to produce their Christmas newsletters, manipulate their digital photographs, or produce local club posters, they are more than suitable.

This article is aimed at home users needing to save money in the on-coming bad times ahead, so it doesn't apply to graphic professionals anyway.

Once you are happy with your Open Source programs in Windows, it is then the time to move over to Linux and the Linux versions. *Your data from your Windows programs will immediately work with the Linux editions.* But do

make sure you spend at least six months familiarising yourself with these programs *before* installing Linux. *This will ensure that once you have loaded Linux, you won't even notice you are running a different operating system.*

Just imagine:

- You will never have to purchase any more software. {save money}
- You will have access to over 18,000 free Linux programs. {save money}
- You will only need lower specification computers. {save money}

I am not going to explain how you load up Ubuntu Linux in this blog as you need to digest and start using the free programs that replace your normal Windows programs. But keep my blog in mind as I will write about it soon. If you use Google Reader, add my address to the Reader list and you will see each blog link as a new blog is written. Use it for news, blogs, websites you visit often – Search within "Amper's Rants" for "**Google Reader**" (with the quotes) to learn what it is really about.

To whet your appetite I will tell you, in simple terms, what you have to do.

Go to the Ubuntu website and download the program. Burn it onto a blank CD. Restart your computer from the CD. Say you want to install Ubuntu onto your hard disk at the prompt. Answer a few questions (keyboard, language etc). Click the button, go and make a cup of tea, and come back to Ubuntu. It will be up and running, the Internet should be available, no disks to add to it. WiFi and Bluetooth run out of the box. *I will spell this out in full detail in a future article.*

Firefox and Open Office will be pre-loaded in your new Linux system, and you can download Thunderbird with one or two clicks. That's all there is to it. Copy your data over from a saved disk and you are all ready to go. *You did save your data, didn't you?*

Logitech Z5 Speakers

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gate and enjoy your entertainment options from across the room.

In Use

To use the supplied remote control it's necessary to install a small file that allows the remote to access your laptop. As the product description says these are small Omni directional stereo speakers powered from your computer's USB connection. Normally when listening to a stereo signal from two speakers the best results are obtained when one sits in front of the speakers equidistant from the two (the sweet spot), but as the Z5's are Omni directional the stereo experience can be obtained from almost anywhere in the room.

I think those present were pleasantly surprised and impressed by the sound that these new speakers gave out. (Logitech have kindly supplied some background to these speakers which follows).

For my demonstration I chose a wide selection of music by playing extracts from CDs and a DVD. The extracts featured the following tracks / samples.

1. **Jazz:** The Jacques Loussier Trio's famous recording of Bach's Air on the G String from the album "Play Bach 2". This recording was used in the Hamlet cigar advertisements for over 35 years.
2. **Vocal 1:** Katherine Jenkins singing Pie Jesu from her new album "Sacred Arias".
3. **Vocal 2:** Elena Kats-Chernin singing "Eliza's Aria" from the "Wild Swans" ballet. "Eliza's Aria" is the quirky tune that features in the Lloyds TSB advertising campaign.
4. **Instrumental:** Alison Balsom playing the first movement of Hummel's Trumpet Concerto from her new album "Haydn and Hummel Trumpet Concertos".
5. **Orchestral/Choral:** Elgar "Coronation Ode 1902 – Land of Hope and Glory" finale. An awesome and hair-raising performance of 'Land of Hope and Glory' in its 'Coronation Ode' setting. Sonically far superior to the version sung annually at the Last Night of the Proms.
6. **DVD:** From Walt Disney's "Fantasia 2000" movie. Camille Saint-Saens "Carnival of the Animals" (finale).

I could find little to fault these speakers, they were easy to set up and in the very large hall used for our demonstration I used the supplied extension lead to move the speakers well apart for best results — we were not disappointed. The quality was excellent, as to be expected the mid-range examples gave best results, particularly the

trumpet concerto, however the Coronation Ode "Land of Hope and Glory" example was surprisingly good, but of course not as good as through a quality amplifier and dedicated HiFi speakers — sadly as with most things, when it comes to audio bigger is normally better. Nevertheless the Z5's are very listenable and I didn't suffer audio fatigue as so often happens when listening to music you like through small speakers.

System Requirements

- Windows-based PC with Windows 98SE, Windows ME, Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Vista or Mac computer with Mac OS X (10.3.9 or higher)
- USB port and CD-ROM drive

Product Specifications

- Dimensions: (L x W x H): 8.4 x 8.4 x 25.4 cm.
- Weight: 1.53 kg (weight of both satellites).

Technical Specifications

- Total power: 2 watts RMS
- System THD: less than 0.05% THD, before clipping
- Signal-to-noise ratio: >70 dB
- Frequency response: 70 Hz - 20 kHz

Pricing and Availability

Logitech Z-5 Omni directional stereo speakers from Amazon.co.uk for around £52 inc VAT and delivery.

LOGITECH'S OMNI-DIRECTIONAL TECH BRIEF

How Logitech's Omni directional Speakers Make Any Spot in Your Room a Sweet Spot

You don't sit in one spot when you're listening to music from your computer or your iPod. Shouldn't your speakers produce great sound no matter where you are in your room? Unfortunately, many speakers don't. In fact, most of today's speakers for the PC or the iPod are designed to deliver the highest-quality sound immediately in front of the speakers. If you move from what audiophiles call the sweet spot on the couch to the impromptu dance floor, the sound you hear can easily become distorted and you might find yourself out of step.

The Logitech Z-5 and Logitech Pure-Fi Express Plus Omni directional speakers are designed to transmit sound more consistently over a wider range of space, so you never miss a beat — no matter where you are in the room.

Traditional Versus Omni directional Loudspeakers

Most speakers are designed to radiate sound in a fixed direction. As shown in Figure 1 (next page), traditional speakers optimize sound for a sweet spot located directly in front of the speakers. In other words, the sweet spot is limited to a constrained sound field that fans outward in one direction. If you're outside the sweet spot, you'll hear unbalanced sound due to loudspeaker directionality.

Directionality is frequency dependent. When music is played through a loudspeaker, many frequencies occur at the same time. Because these frequencies radiate differently, the perceived tonal balance changes when you move around the loudspeaker. For example, when you're in front of a directional loudspeaker, the bass, midrange and treble frequencies are usually balanced. But if you move into a location to the side or back of the loudspeaker, then the treble and midrange frequencies can drop out. However, you'll hear this imbalance even when you're in the sweet spot because the unbalanced sound (radiating at the side and behind the loudspeaker) is reflected back toward you by the walls and furniture in your room.

Logitech Audio Labs' Omni directional speakers differ from traditional speakers. Designed to radiate sound more uniformly over a wider range of frequencies and angles, Logitech's Omni directional speakers create a broad sweet spot that is not dependent on a fixed listening position. However, the true hallmark of Omni directional speakers is the increased sound quality that comes from tonally balanced direct and reflected sound.

The Science Behind the Broad Sweet Spot

As long as people have been designing objects to transfer sound from one location to another, there have been attempts to understand how sound travels through space. Though the range of human hearing is fairly wide, the properties of a sound wave complicate loudspeaker design.

As an example, consider your living room. Imagine that you're listening to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. The range of sound — from the very low-range frequencies of the bass cello to the very high-range frequencies of the piccolo — is radiated through your room in a multiplicity of ways. You hear the sound generated by movement of the loudspeaker driver. The driver moves the air molecules that are next to it, which creates a wave that travels through the air and eventually reaches you.

At low frequencies, the wavelength of sound is large and the wave wraps around the loudspeaker enclosure, radiating evenly in all directions. At high frequencies, the wavelength

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of sound is short compared to the size of the loudspeaker, and the wave radiates primarily forward. As a result, if you begin listening to the famous four-note motif that opens the *Fifth Symphony* when you're sitting in front of a traditional loudspeaker, the stirring notes of the opening bars will sound rich and articulate. But if you move to the side of your room and listen for the same motif as it occurs throughout the symphony, the same notes can begin to sound distorted.

Logitech's Omni directional acoustics produce evenly distributed sound radiation in the listening plane using forward- and backward-firing drivers. At low frequencies, the radiation is Omni directional. As

the frequency transitions from low to high, the pattern becomes dual-lobed. The dual-lobed pattern covers a much wider range of angles than the traditional loudspeaker, which creates only one lobe (See Figure 2).

The increased reverberant sound field also increases the sensation of spaciousness and listener envelopment. By designing loudspeakers to radiate sound more uniformly, Logitech delivers great sound to any spot in the room.

Logitech Audio Labs' and Omni directional speakers, the Next Evolution of Sound

After nearly ten years of developing a robust laboratory and a staff of engineers, the Logitech Audio Labs is a significant

force in the development of audio technologies for many platforms,

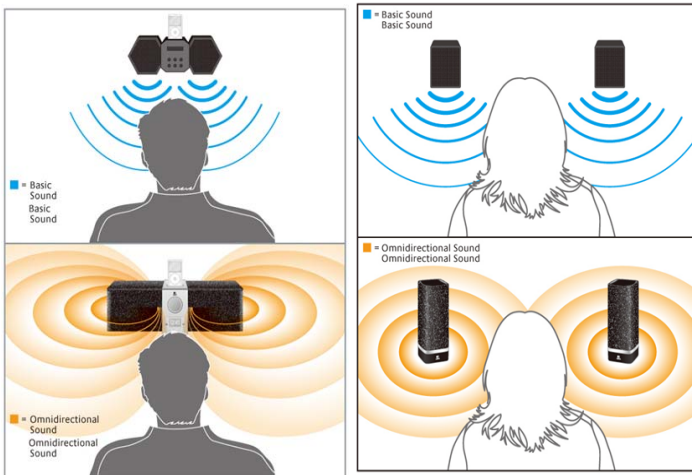


Figure 1: Traditional radiation patterns compared to Omni directional radiation patterns. Traditional loudspeakers are optimized for a narrow sweet spot. Omni directional loudspeakers are designed to radiate sound more uniformly over a wider range of frequencies and angles.

including the PC, iPod, digital music players, headsets for computers, and the PlayStation, Xbox and Wii gaming consoles. Omni directional speakers represent the next evolution in speaker design for your PC and iPod – and offer you a better way to enjoy the music and videos you love.

References:

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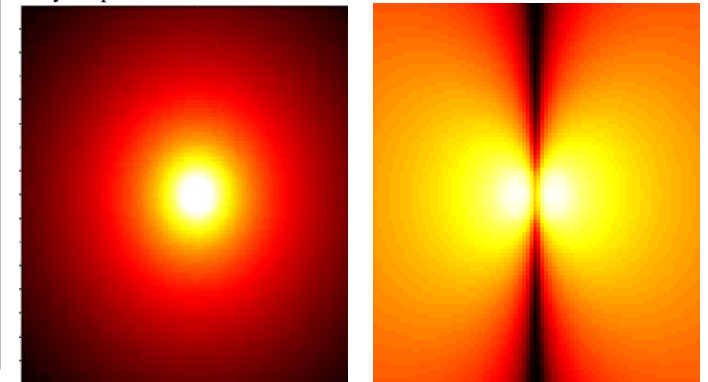


Figure 2: Intensity plots of polar radiation for the bipole loudspeaker. On the left is the ideal Omni directional radiation that occurs for low frequencies. On the right is dual lobed radiation pattern for high frequencies. 0° is to the right.

Logitech V550 Nano Cordless Laser Mouse for Notebooks

Product Description — More freedom to move around with your notebook

You're on the move all day – from your desk to your next meeting and back or from your home office to the living room. Wouldn't it be great if you had a mouse that you could just attach to your notebook and go?



The Logitech V550 Nano Cordless Laser Mouse for Notebooks is that mouse, featuring the innovative Clip-and-Go dock. Now, you can clip your mouse to your notebook – and you have one less thing to carry.

Key Features

- Clip-and-Go dock allows you to clip your mouse to your notebook and go.
 - Plug-and-Forget Nano-receiver is so small it stays in your notebook, so your mouse is always ready to use.
 - 18-month battery life gives you more power than ever before. Plus, the mouse automatically turns off when docked to your notebook.
 - Hyper-fast scrolling lets you fly through long documents and Web pages. One spin and you'll never go back to an ordinary scroll wheel.

- Logitech's advanced 2.4 GHz wireless technology provides a powerful, reliable connection with virtually no delays or dropouts – even in the busiest wireless environments.

System Requirements

- Windows-based PC with Windows XP or Windows Vista or
- Mac computer with Mac OS X (10.3.9 or later)
- USB port

Product Specifications

- Dimensions (L x W x H): 10 cm x 5.8 cm x 3.4 cm
- Weight: 69 grams without receiver
- 71 grams with receiver
- 120 grams with receiver and 2 AA batteries.

Review to Follow.