



THE COMPUTER CONNECTION  
SAUK COMPUTER USER GROUP

OCTOBER 2009

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MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2009

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Art and John Miller opened the meeting with the Question and Answer session. There were four guests and 19 members present.

After a short break, the business meeting started with Tom Cartwright conducting in **Neal's absence.**

A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the minutes of last meeting as **published, and the treasurer's report as read.** Terry passed around copies of the flier he

has printed for the Mall show.

Joe Fornero announced that boxes for the Christmas Child program will be packed at the October meeting.

The raffle was held and was followed without a break by Rob Toole presenting a demonstration of the new Windows 7, with Don Willhite assisting at the computer. It was a great presentation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Angela V. Rester, club secretary

Club Information

Sauk Computer User Group

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Joe Fornero

MINUTES: CLUB BOARD MEETING SEP 15, 2009

The meeting was held at the home of Terry and Glenda MacLennan in Dixon. Present at meeting were Joe Fornero, Don Haag, Myron Kliment, Neal Shipley, Terry MacLennan and Angela Rester.

Terry started by giving a demo of the presentation he has compiled for the Mall show. Additional discussion with a practice session to be held at **Neal's house Sep. 16th.**

The purchase of a better projector for use by the club

was discussed and preliminary approval was passed. More information and a motion for the entire membership will be brought up at the next meeting.

John Miller will be doing **the October program on "What's new on find stuff on Internet".**

It was moved and seconded to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted by  
Angela Rester, club secretary

## UPCOMING EVENTS

By the time you get this newsletter we will have had an information table at the White-side Senior Center Health and Information Fair on Wednesday, September 30th. Hopefully this will be a good preparation for the October 3rd mall promotion.

I placed a second order for SCUG shirts and they should be arriving and ready for **distribution at October's meeting.**

If you read the board minutes, you will see that the board preliminarily approved getting a different projector, a Nec MT1065 for the group. It has arrived and looks great! Originally MSRP was \$4,249, it is a used unit. It has lots of power, 2600 lumens in economy mode and 3200 lumens in regular mode. It should have much better quality and be able to be used with lights on. You can read a review at:

[http://www.projectorcentral.com/wireless\\_nec\\_mt1065.htm](http://www.projectorcentral.com/wireless_nec_mt1065.htm)

A 2 year extended warranty to cover repairs excluding the lamp, up to purchase price for additional \$47.24 was purchased from SquareTrade Warranty Services. The membership will still need to approve the purchase.

Joe Fornero— Assist. Editor

## OCTOBER RAFFLE

This coming month, for raffle, we will have a 4 Gigabyte thumb drive along with many other smaller items.

## SCUG OUTREACH PROJECT

We will be packing boxes for our Outreach Project which is Operation Christmas Child at the October meeting. Joe will providing everything needed to pack the boxes from 12:00PM - 1:00PM. A \$12.00 donation will cover the box, everything that goes in the box and the shipping. That's not much to make a child happy. Read more about it at: <http://www.samaritanspurse.org/>

## VINTAGE MICROSOFT HUMOR

There was once a young man who, in his youth, professed his desire to become a great writer.

When asked to define "great" he replied, 'I want to write stuff that the whole world will read, stuff that people will react to on a truly emotional level, stuff that will make them scream, cry, howl in pain and anger!'

He now works for Microsoft, writing error messages.

# BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT GIVING INFO TO CENSUS WORKERS

With the U.S. Census process beginning, the Better Business Bureau, or BBB, advises people to be cooperative, but cautious, so as not to become a victim of fraud or identity theft.

The first phase of the 2010 U.S. Census is under way, as workers have begun verifying the addresses of households across the country. Eventually, more than 140,000 U.S. Census workers will count every person in the United States and gather information about every person living at each address including name, age, gender, race and other relevant data. The big question is - how do

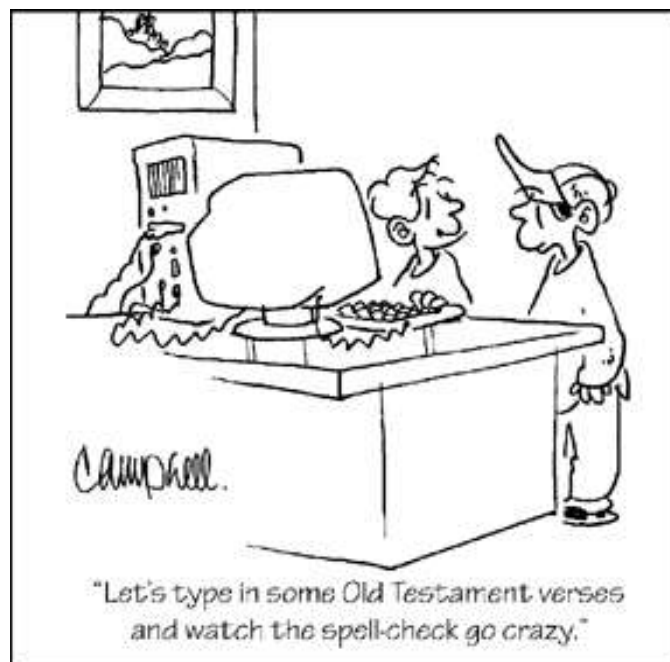
you tell the difference between a U.S. Census worker and a con artist? The BBB offers the following advice:

If a U.S. Census worker knocks on your door, they will have a badge, handheld device, Census Bureau canvas bag and confidentiality notice. Ask to see their identification and their badge before answering their questions. However, you should never invite anyone you do not know into your home.

Census workers are currently only knocking on doors to verify address information. Do not give your Social Security Number, credit card or banking infor-

mation to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. Census. While the Census Bureau might ask for basic financial information, such as a salary range, it will not ask for Social Security, bank account or credit card numbers nor will employees solicit donations.

Eventually, Census workers may contact you by telephone, mail or in person at home. However, they will not contact you by e-mail, so be on the lookout for e-mail scams impersonating the Census. Never click on a link or open any attachments in an e-mail that are supposedly from the U.S. Census Bureau.



USER HELPING USER

# Browsers

## Track Web Pages With Update Scanner

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds are great for keeping up with Web pages that provide regular blog-like updates. Some pages, however, do not provide an RSS feed. Other pages might not have the neat, discrete posts directly compatible with feed readers.

A variety of utilities pick up the slack by scanning Web pages for any text changes and notifying you when a difference is found. If you use Firefox, one worthy representative comes in the form of an add-on extension called Update Scanner.

### Keeping Track

Download the free Update Scanner from the online stable of Firefox extensions at <https://addons.mozilla.org>. Search for Update Scanner using the green search bar. Once you find and select it, click the Add To Firefox button to load it in your browser. **You'll probably need** to restart Firefox for the add-on to take effect.

Once Firefox is up and running, **you'll need to configure entries** for the Web pages you want to monitor. Click Firefox's Tools menu and then choose Update Scanner. A sidebar appears on the left edge of the screen.

The sidebar lists one example entry to get you started: the Update Scanner Website. **You'll probably want to** delete that site and set up your own using the buttons across the top of the sidebar. Click the Update Scanner Website icon and then click the Delete button, which looks like a shredder.

The first button on the far-left end of the Update Scanner toolbar creates a new entry. By default, the window that pops up includes the name and URL for the page currently being displayed in the browser window, but you can change this to any URL you want to track.

### Zero In

The Autoscan slider lets you set how often the program should check the selected Web site for updates. You can choose anywhere from every five minutes to every

week or only manual scans. This is a particularly important choice if you have Update Scanner tracking more than a few sites. Checking too many pages too frequently can noticeably slow down your browser, so go easy on the update schedule with sites you do not think will really change that often.

The next slider under Change Threshold fine-tunes what Update Scanner should notify you about and what it can safely ignore. For example, a simple change in a date might not be worth noting. The Change Threshold section includes two options to weed out minor alterations. The checkbox tells Update Scanner to ignore changes to numbers only. The slider will ignore changes that affect the specified number of words on the page.

The Change Threshold setting can be tricky, however. Maybe you want to know when a new photo is posted on a particular site. Depending on whether the picture is accompanied by a long caption, that sort of change might not involve enough characters to meet the threshold you have set. You might have to experiment with this option so it works most efficiently with different pages.

**When you're finished setting up a new site, click OK.** You can click the Scan button in the Update Scanner sidebar to start a manual scan of your chosen Web sites or simply let Update Scanner do its work on the schedule that you set. If you want to edit an existing selection, you need to **right-click the site's name and choose Properties** from the context menu.

### Watch & Wait

**When you're finished setting up your pages, click the small "x" to close the Update Scanner sidebar** (it does not need

to be open for Update Scanner to monitor pages). When the program detects a change to **one of your Web sites, you'll get a small pop-up notice, and if the sidebar is open, you'll see a blue arrow next to the site name.** Click the site name in the sidebar to see a version of the tracked page with all changes highlighted yellow. The sidebar button that looks like a tab (second from the left) will simultaneously open all changed pages in their own tabs.

While Update Scanner is something of a specialized tool given the popularity of RSS feeds, it does its job well. ■

*by Alan Phelps*

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### SMART COMPUTING TIPS & FUN FACTS

**Gaming Tips For Parents & Grandparents:** Aside from checking a game's ESRB (Entertainment Software Rating Board) rating, there are other ways you can ensure the video games your youngsters are playing are age-appropriate.

Carefully look at everything on a title's packaging, including the game graphics. Find game reviews, screen shots, or demos to get a better idea of a game's content.

If available, use the game's parental controls to restrict inappropriate content. Learn about games by talking to other parents and older children who are familiar with or have played certain titles.

Participate in your children's gaming and discuss their games as much as possible.

Be aware of nonrated ESRB material a game may contain. "Mods" are program downloads that can alter a game's content, and online games often have live player chats as well as other user-generated content.

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# Online Calendars

## Eliminate Clutter & Keep Everyone Current

With dance practice, book club, piano lessons, dentist appointments, and all of the other activities your family is involved in, keeping track of your personal schedule is just as hard as remembering whose turn it is to drive the soccer practice carpool. Your family may have a traditional paper calendar **that's kept in the kitchen, but** keeping it current is hard work because times and dates seem to change as quickly as you can say the word "recital." **Not only is it** difficult to remember to add events, but not everything can fit in the small square boxes the paper calendar has to offer, either.

**If you're looking for a flexible** and convenient way to keep your family on the same page, virtual calendars may be the answer. This type of calendar is accessible from any Internet connection so you can change it from work and your kids can access it from school, which helps keep everyone up-to-date and reduces the chances that someone will miss an event. Additionally, signing up for an online calendar account is almost always free, so your family **budget won't be affected.**

### Ditch The Kitchen Calendar

Online calendars offer many more features than your typical paper calendar. Rather

than crossing out, erasing, and scribbling on your paper calendar as your schedule changes, you can add events by simply double-clicking the appropriate date or selecting the Add Event link. Removing an event is as easy as double-clicking the event and selecting the corresponding Delete Event link. Additionally, you can add the time and the duration of the event. Once you give the event a title, you can describe it with as many details as needed. Because many paper calendars have limited space to add details to events, this can be especially helpful when coordinating group events and explaining any special details your family needs to know about.

Generally, you will also have separate inputs for information, such as the location, attendees, and whether this is a recurring event. Recurring events, such as choir practice at 7 p.m. every Wednesday, can usually be set up by simply selecting a checkbox. If you need to edit one event or the whole series, you will have the option to do both.

Many online calendars also let you set up reminders for your **events. So if you're afraid you or** others might forget an event, you can send a reminder, which will come in the form of an email, text message, or a different delivery method. Some online calendars also offer features such as tasks and to-do

lists. These lists are sometimes associated with events, or they are available to use in a more general sense. If your whole family has access to these lists, **it's easier to communicate simple things,** such as the weekly chores lists, than if you try and squeeze them into the margins of your paper calendar.

To help accommodate the separate schedules of each family member, some online calendar applications let each member of the family keep his or her own calendar and then simply have a list of shared events everyone can access. Each of your children can separately keep track of when homework is due and share it with you or a classmate, while keeping it apart from siblings in order to avoid clutter and confusion.

### Online Calendar Quest

The Web has several online calendars to offer. Google, Yahoo!, and Windows Live, for instance, have similar online calendars with all the aforementioned features. Each online calendar, however, has a different user interface. If you have an email account through one of these **services, it's likely you can integrate** your email and your calendar, and the user interface will likely be more recognizable and comfortable for you to use.

There are subtle differences among Google Calendar ([www.google.com/calendar](http://www.google.com/calendar)),

Yahoo! Calendar ([calendar.yahoo.com](http://calendar.yahoo.com)), and Windows Live Calendar ([calendar.live.com](http://calendar.live.com)). You will find that each handles tasks, event details, and reminders slightly different than the other, and the sharing capabilities will vary.

30 Boxes ([30boxes.com](http://30boxes.com)) is an online calendar that differs slightly from the Google, Yahoo!, and Windows Live calendars. After signing up for a free account, you can share your calendar with social networking friends or other contacts, which are referred to as “buddies.” **30 Boxes lets you** integrate your calendar with applications such as Twitter ([twitter.com](http://twitter.com)), Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)), and more. You can send messages to your buddies via 30 Boxes, as well as add tasks to your to-do list. Avatars can also be added to your 30 Boxes calendar.

CalendarFly ([www.calendarfly.com](http://www.calendarfly.com)) is an online calendar that is designed especially for families, clubs, schools, and other groups. In addition to being able to keep a personal calendar, you can share events with your friends and family contacts. Events can be categorized by a task, homework assignment, practice, holiday,

or an event. You can build your own to-do list to help you stay on top of tasks. CalendarFly lets you upload files, which is handy when you need to distribute a document for an upcoming meeting or group project.

### Synchronized Scheduling

If you use another email client at home or at work, such as Microsoft Outlook, try to find an online calendar that can synchronize with other common calendar applications. This will help you keep both your work and personal schedules in tune with each other, and it can help you avoid double-booking yourself.

Additionally, some family-friendly social networking sites, such as Multiply ([www.multiply.com](http://www.multiply.com)) and Famundo ([www.famundo.com](http://www.famundo.com)), offer calendars that you and your family can use and share with each other. When organizations you are involved in, such as a church group or a special interest club, use a social networking group calendar or a group-oriented calendar, you can integrate schedules. This helps you remember to include the meeting times and dates on your calendar, and it can help jog your memory when **you can't remember whose** house you are supposed to

meet at that night.

*by Tessa Warner Breneman*

## Get Moving

Even the most sophisticated **online calendar won't help you** if you forget to enter appointments and events into it. Luckily, some online calendars will synchronize with your smartphone so you can enter the appointment or event on the go.

For example, Google Calendar can be synchronized with both the BlackBerry calendar application and the Android calendar application. You can also download mobile gadgets for other mobile operating systems, such as the iPhone OS. Windows Mobile phones can be synchronized with Windows Live Calendar. When Windows Mobile 6.5 hits the market (which should happen later this year), Windows Live services, such as the calendar and email, will be even more integrated into Windows-powered phones.

Yahoo! Mobile services ([mobile.yahoo.com](http://mobile.yahoo.com)), such as email and calendar applications, can also be accessed from your mobile phone so you can stay on top of your schedule.

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## FILE EXTENSIONS - PART 3 – AUDIO FILES

by

Terry MacLennan

In this article, we are going to talk about the various audio file extensions used for sounds and music. There are over 300 various types used for a wide variety of applications such as video games, DVDs for your television sets, portable devices such as phones, PDAs, music players and on and on. This article will only discuss just a few of the more common ones and a couple of not-so-common ones to give you an understanding of what is being used mainly for your computer.

I am setting this up in the form of a table for ease of reading. Column 1 is the file extension, column 2 is a few details about it while column 3 lists the most common players of the file (not all will be listed). Windows Media Player will be abbreviated WMP, Apple Quick Time Player (QT), Real Networks Player (RP), Macromedia Flash Player (MFP), and Java Sound Machine (JSM).

<b>FILE</b>	<b>DETAILS AND INFORMATION</b>	<b>PLAYER</b>
<b>.aif</b>	Audio Interchange File CD-quality audio file, similar to a .WAV file; developed by Apple Computer, but based on the Electronic Arts .IFF format; standard CD audio AIFF files use a sampling rate of 44.1KHz, are 16-bit, and have two channels (for stereo sound).	QT WMP
<b>.iff</b>	Universal file format developed by Electronic Arts; may contain text, image, or audio data; used as the basis for several other file formats and is supported by many programs	QT
<b>.mid</b> <b>.midi</b>	Standard MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) file; contains music data such as what notes are played, when they are played, how long each note is held, and the loudness (velocity) of each note.	QT WMP
<b>.mpga</b>	Compressed audio file encoded with MPEG-1 Layer 1 compression; compresses the audio using lossy compression that maintains most of the original sound quality. MPGA files are basically .MP3 files with a different file extension.	WMP RP all mp3 players
<b>.mp3</b>	Compressed audio format developed by the Moving Picture Experts Group; uses "Layer 3" audio compression; commonly used to store music files and audio books on a hard drive; may provide near-CD quality sound (stereo, 16-bit) in a file roughly 1/10 the size of a .WAV or .AIF file. MP3 files are supported by most portable music players, such as the Apple iPod and Microsoft Zune; they can also be played on the Amazon Kindle; Symbian OS mobile phones can play MP3 files using the UltraMP3 program	WMP
<b>.r1m</b>	Temporary file saved by RealPlayer or RealOne Player when a streaming media file is downloaded from the Internet; created as a buffer when the media file is being streamed by RealOne Player; not meant to be opened by the user.	RP
<b>.ra</b>	Audio file created by RealPlayer; may contain audio data or may reference a streaming audio file online; uses a proprietary Real compression algorithm; common format for playing audio clips within a Web browser.	RP
<b>.ram</b>	Audio file created with RealPlayer that uses the proprietary Real compression algorithm; may contain audio data or may reference a streaming audio file online.	RP
<b>.rmi</b>	MIDI file stored in the Resource Interchange File Format (RIFF); technically, a MIDI file wrapped in an RIFF container; the format was originally introduced by Microsoft.	QT or midi player

## FILE EXTENSIONS - PART 3 – AUDIO FILES (cont.)

by  
Terry MacLennan

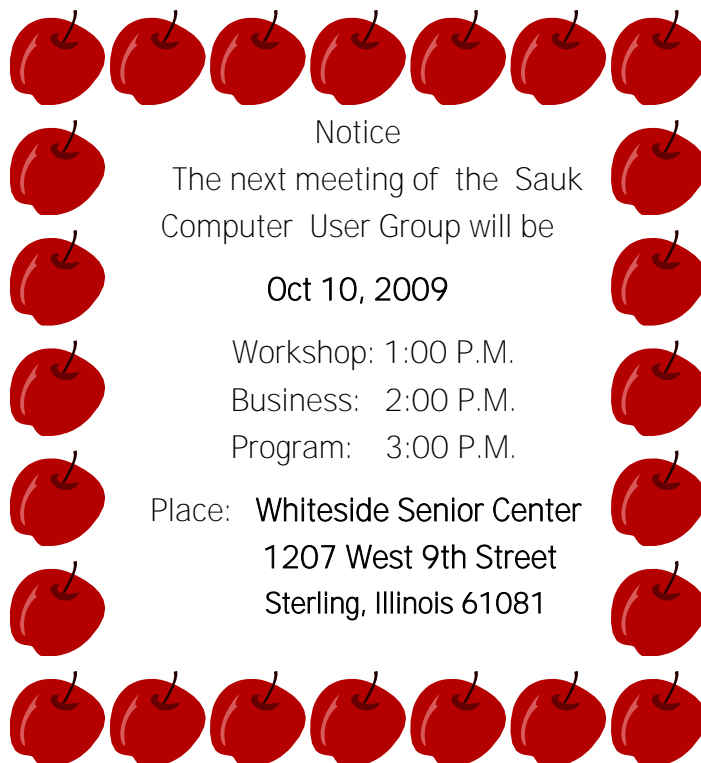
<b>.rmf</b>	Audio format created by Beatnik that can contain both audio and MIDI sequences; often used in video games.	QT, JSM, Beatnik
<b>.smf</b>	Formal MIDI file specification developed by the MIDI Manufacturers Association; similar to a .MID file	QT
<b>.rmj</b>	Proprietary audio format used by Real Media Jukebox, also known as RealJukebox; saved in a slightly different format than .RA and .RAM files, which are used by RealPlayer. RealJukebox was a jukebox-style music player created by RealNetworks; it has since been replaced by RealPlayer and is no longer developed; RMJ files may be played in RealPlayer or other compatible programs.	RP
<b>.swa</b>	Macromedia Shockwave compressed audio format, similar to .MP3; used for the audio portion of Flash (.SWF) animations	QT, MFP
<b>.vag</b>	Compressed sound format used by PlayStation and PlayStation Portable games.	Play Station
<b>.wav</b>	Standard digital audio file format for storing waveform data; allows audio recordings to be saved with different sampling rates and bitrates; often used to save CD-quality audio.	WMP and just about all players
<b>.wma</b>	Audio file compressed with Windows Media compression; proprietary format developed by Microsoft, similar to the .MP3 format; can be converted to other more standardized formats; often used for playing music from the Web.	WMP



**"It's the latest innovation in office safety.  
When your computer crashes, an air bag is activated  
so you won't bang your head in frustration."**

Sauk Computer User Group  
User Helping User  
3406 E. 19th St.  
Sterling, IL 61081

There will be a Question & Answer  
Session starting at 1PM.  
Bring any questions you have about  
your computer or problems you may  
be having. It will be conducted by:  
**Neal Shipley & Art Bendick**



Notice

The next meeting of the Sauk  
Computer User Group will be

**Oct 10, 2009**

Workshop: 1:00 P.M.

Business: 2:00 P.M.

Program: 3:00 P.M.

Place: **Whiteside Senior Center**

**1207 West 9th Street**

**Sterling, Illinois 61081**

OCTOBER'S MEETING THEME: WHAT'S NEW IN FINDING STUFF ON  
THE INTERNET BY JOHN MILLER