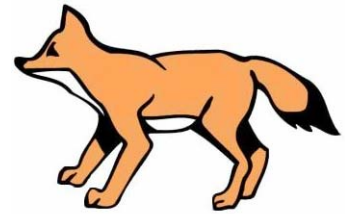


# FOX TALES



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October 2008

## Midwest User Group Computer Conference

Jon Jackman – President FVPCA

As advertised, the MWUG conference held in Chicago Heights on September 19-21 was geared for users. Bill Palmer and Jon Jackman attended the Saturday sessions and enjoyed a variety of topics that were presented. There were "perks" that were provided to attendees, including a free Skype headset, a coupon for some free Skype calling time, a 512 MB thumb drive and various demo programs on CDs, as well as brochures and discounts. We missed the Google Earth program offered on Friday evening and were not there to participate in the free vendor giveaways on Sunday, but what we did see was worth the time and expense. Part of our October General Meeting will include a panel discussion on the experience. There was an article in this quarter's APCUG Reports that summarized the event and had some photos from Friday night. Here is a link for this quarter's APCUG Reports: <http://reports.apcug.org/2008q4.htm>. We met up with two members from the Sandwich Computer User Group (SCUG), Jerry Kell and Jerry Grommes. We briefly discussed how we might have some kind of combined meeting. It seems that they meet on the third Thursday, and have conflicts with attending the third Saturday's when we get together. Their site is: <http://www.scug.org>. We will continue to try to get something going for next year.

An agenda item at our October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting will involve the nominations of candidates for the election of officers for 2009. Presently, the existing officers have all expressed a willingness to continue in their current positions, but if you have an interest in joining the Executive Board, please let one of the members of our Nominating Committee know at our October meeting. Nominations will be announced and posted on our web site. Elections will be held at our General Meeting on November 15<sup>th</sup>. To participate in the election, be sure that your membership dues are up to date. As it looks right now: President: Jon Jackman, Vice President: Tom Anzalone, Secretary: William Palmer, Treasurer: Richard Chamberlain. There are other appointed positions that are available, which we will review at the meeting.

As we cancelled the September meeting, the DOQ-3 was moved up to August. I will have an updated index of all of the DOQ offerings available soon. At our Executive meeting it was suggested that we bump the DOQ-4 release back to January, since we do not have a meeting in December. What do you think?

The Executive Committee is looking ahead to upcoming programs. In November we will take a look at Skype, a VOIP alternative to land-based phone calling. You can "call" other PCs for free, or a landline number for a small fee.

(See Page 4)

# Google's New "Chrome Browser" (Beta) Not Yet Ready for Prime Time



By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX:  
Radio & TV Show Host

lwilsker (at) apcug.net

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WEBSITE: <http://www.google.com/chrome>

As I type this, the national media is playing up the fact that today is Google's tenth anniversary. In that time it has become the predominate player in the search industry, with a market share of about two-thirds. By more than coincidence, Google also recently announced the public release of a beta version (pre-release) of its free new browser with the moniker "Chrome". It is no secret that Google is in a competitive war with some parts of the Microsoft dynasty, and Chrome is intended to be a competitor of Internet Explorer (IE). By design, Chrome may be a superior browser to IE, but in the few days that I have used it, I have to conclude that the current beta version is "...not yet ready for prime time." Several of the websites that I routinely visit, including two different webmail accounts, My Yahoo, my weather page, and some other sites would partly load and display, and then disappear with a black window with a white font and graphic displayed. The graphic is of a frowning web page, and the expression "Aw Snap! Something went wrong while displaying this webpage. To continue press Reload or go to another page." Reloading would not fix the problem on any page where the error appeared. This is why I believe that this beta version, while fast, attractive and feature rich, is not quite ready to take its place as a primary or secondary browser. For the record, every page that failed to load in Chrome, loaded flawlessly in IE and Firefox. Despite this nagging bug, Chrome is still a worthwhile free download, because it has several interesting features lacking on the competing browsers, especially its obvious target, Chrome's nemesis, Internet Explorer.



Chrome (beta) was fast and easy to download from [www.google.com/chrome](http://www.google.com/chrome), and effortlessly installed on my XP machine. During the install I was given the option to import bookmarks (favorites), cookies, and passwords from Internet Explorer, which I chose to do. While unstated by Google, it appears obvious that later versions of Chrome will be able to import data from Firefox. Chrome will also run on Vista, and versions for Mac and Linux are in the works.

(Continued on Page 3)

## Google's New "Chrome Browser" (Beta) (Cont'd)

After reading about Chrome and its features, I was excited about its potential. It is written in open source code using some of the best features of other open source products such as Firefox and Apple's WebKit. The code is tight and compact, and when it works, appears to load and display websites much faster than IE. Some of the technical websites have actually tested the load times of popular websites, and Chrome may be the fastest browser available. One feature about Chrome, which I was especially interested in, was its default display of thumbnails of the websites most frequently visited by the user. Clicking on the thumbnail would instantly open the website either in that window, or in another tab (window) at the user's discretion. The appearance of the Chrome browser is clean and uncluttered. Each Chrome tab or window is loaded in a virtual "sandbox" such that if one web page crashes, it will not take down the entire browser, but instead only close the affected tab. More and more applications are being integrated, many of which can be run directly from Chrome. Clicking on the control icon on the toolbar of Chrome gives several options, one of which is to create instant application shortcuts which can load applications into Chrome. An icon is created and placed on the desktop by Chrome, and clicking on that icon directly opens the application in a Chrome tab, even if Chrome is not loaded or is offline. This can give near instant access to such services as Gmail, Google Calendar, or most other applications.

Utilizing a concept "one box for everything" enables the traditional address bar of the browser to perform several simultaneous functions. As information is typed in the address bar, Google (by default) will identify previous websites visited as well as suggested search topics which become more detailed as more is typed. While Google is the factory default search setting, it can be easily changed to other major search engines, such as Yahoo. Multiple sites, such as EBay, Amazon, and others can also be selectively searched as determined by the user.

Chrome uses tabbed browsing long a staple of Firefox, but fairly new in IE. The tabs are dynamic, in that they can be dragged changing their order on the top of the screen, or into a window creating a new window. This gives the user total control over the appearance of the pages displayed for comparison or other purposes, and is an attractive feature. Another useful feature in Chrome that also previously appeared as a default in Firefox is a safe browsing function. Chrome dynamically checks websites entered in the address bar against a continuously updated database of malware and phishing (identity theft) websites, and displays the following in a red warning window in a large font, "WARNING: Visiting this site may harm your computer!".

Many users like to create lists of bookmarks and favorites, and Chrome makes book marking sites very fast and easy. There is a small star on the address bar, and clicking on the star creates the bookmark, with the option to modify the bookmark. Another common task that Chrome handles very well is downloading files. Rather than using a download manager, Chrome displays download progress in the bottom of the window. When completed, the downloaded file can be dragged to the desktop or elsewhere, or opened directly by clicking on the filename in Chrome.

Chrome has been a lot of fun to play with, despite my frustrations trying to open some web sites. Google will be releasing frequent updates, and hopefully the page loading bug will be quickly remedied. If you want to try the latest in browser technology, being fully cognizant that it is currently a beta version, then Chrome may be a worthy browser to download and install. Chrome coexists just fine with IE and Firefox, and does not interfere with them.

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# Comcast Acceptable Use Policy

Jon Jackman – President FVPCA

I recently got the following e-mail from Comcast. As I do a lot of downloads for the DOQ's as well as download updates in the process of various PC repairs and content of web pages, I was concerned that I may go over my limit. This is something that few of us will encounter, but thought it something that Comcast users should be aware of:

**Dear Comcast High-Speed Internet Customer,**

**We appreciate your business and strive to provide you with the best online experience possible. One of the ways we do this is through our Acceptable Use Policy (AUP). The AUP outlines acceptable use of our service as well as steps we take to protect our customers from things that can negatively impact their experience online. This policy has been in place for many years and we update it periodically to keep it current with our customers' use of our service.**

**On October 1, 2008, we will post an updated AUP that will go into effect at that time.**

**In the updated AUP, we clarify that monthly data (or bandwidth) usage of more than 250 Gigabytes (GB) is the specific threshold that defines excessive use of our service. We have an excessive use policy because a fraction of one percent of our customers use such a disproportionate amount of bandwidth every month that they may degrade the online experience of other customers.**

**250 GB/month is an extremely large amount of bandwidth and it's very likely that your monthly data usage doesn't even come close to that amount. In fact, the threshold is approximately 100 times greater than the typical or median residential customer usage, which is 2 to 3 GB/month. To put it in perspective, to reach 250 GB of data usage in one month a customer would have to do any one of the following:**

- \* Send more than 50 million plain text emails (at 5 KB/email);**
- \* Download 62,500 songs (at 4 MB/song); or**
- \* Download 125 standard definition movies (at 2 GB/movie).**

**And online gamers should know that even the heaviest multi- or single-player gaming activity would not typically come close to this threshold over the course of a month.**

**In addition to modifying the excessive use policy, the updated AUP contains other clarifications of terms concerning reporting violations, newsgroups, and network management. To read some helpful FAQs, please visit:**

**<http://help.comcast.net/content/fag/Frequently-Asked-Questions-about-Excessive-Use>.**

**Thank you again for choosing Comcast as your high-speed Internet provider.**

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## **Midwest User Group Computer Conference (Cont'd)**

Skype was used for one of the MWUG sessions on remote computing. We would like to try and develop something on live web chat with a web camera. Tom's new Lenovo laptop has some new technology which will be explored at an upcoming meeting. As the holidays approach we will also look at new gadgets that may be on your horizon. We are looking into having another program that will examine analog to digital conversion. This time targeting converting your old cassette tapes into digital tracks. We are also looking at a demonstration on burning video to DVDs. If you have any suggestions for a program, or have some expertise with a topic that may be of interest, please let Craig McGregor, or one of the other Board Members know. We may be willing to provide a discounted or trial application for you to try, with the condition that you put on a brief program for the club at some future date.

(See Page 6)

# Anti-Virus Virus

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS  
www.compukiss.com  
sandy (at) compukiss.com

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I hate writing about computer viruses. It always reminds me of how many unscrupulous, money-hungry people there are in the world. Yet, there are times when I feel that I must write about a certain virus because it is causing so much havoc for everyday computer users. Unfortunately, that time has come again. In the past two weeks, my company has removed a very bad group of viruses from six different computers. So I feel it is time to send out a warning.

There are many different variations of this virus and its cousins. They have many different names, including Antivirus 2008, Antivirus 2009, SpywareScanner 2008, and AntiVirXP08. Some experts are calling them viruses. Some are calling them malware. Symantec calls them misleading applications. McAfee lists them as a PUPs (potentially unwanted programs). Whatever you call them, they are terribly invasive.

By most accounts, these awful applications piggy-back on programs that are downloaded from the Internet. However, some experts are warning that your computer may become infected by simply visiting certain websites, especially if your operating system and/or antivirus software is not up-to-date.

The gist of the matter is that once your computer is infected, you will begin to see pop-up windows that give an exaggerated report of the number of threats that your computer is infected with. The window may say something like "Your computer has become infected with 231 computer viruses and spyware." These pop-ups try to scare you into purchasing their antivirus or antispyware software. If you purchase it, they send you a registry key, but it doesn't work because the program they sell you doesn't exist. These viruses are also being spread by malicious websites that sell fake antispyware software. On top of that, there are many other viruses or pieces of malware that can piggyback on the main virus. So this malware can dramatically slow down or even stop your computer. The infections being caused by these viruses and malware programs are extremely harmful and can be very difficult to remove. They often require a cleanup by a professional or a complete reformatting of the hard drive and reinstallation of the software.

As an everyday computer user, you need to be very careful about the software that you download from the Internet. Make sure that it is from a source that you know to be reputable or a website that has been recommended by a trustworthy source. You can also use a program like the McAfee Site Advisor to help you assess the validity of the website before you download the program. McAfee's Site Advisor is a small program that is used by your Internet browser to indicate the safety of websites. It is a free download available at [www.siteadvisor.com](http://www.siteadvisor.com) and it is a valuable tool. Also, as usual, be sure that you update your operating system and antivirus software regularly. Don't fall for any program that pops up on your computer trying to scare you into purchasing antivirus or antispyware software.

Yes, the bad guys are out there and they have a lot of computer savvy. So we all need to be smart about the software we download and the websites we visit.



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## Recycling Tips

Obsolete electronic gadgets -

Don't pitch them, recycle them. Check out [www.epa.gov/ecycling](http://www.epa.gov/ecycling) or [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) for info about electronics recycling.

In Illinois, [http://www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/bureaus/energy\\_recycling/recycling](http://www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/bureaus/energy_recycling/recycling) and [http://www.illinoisrecycles.org/byteback\\_text.html](http://www.illinoisrecycles.org/byteback_text.html).



### *THE FOX VALLEY PC ASSOCIATION*

**The Fox Valley PC Association is dedicated to the task of providing computer information to our fellow members. We are a non-profit organization. The group has been active since January 1985. The dues are \$30 per year. Our meetings are held on the third Saturday of the month (except December.)**

**The meeting place for (October) will be at the Oswego Civic Center, 5 Ashlawn Ave, Montgomery, IL The formal meeting starts at 9:15 A.M. Non-member visitors are always welcome. If you can, please come early & help with set-up. Thanks!**

**"USERS HELPING USERS"**

## Membership Renewals

No new members or renewals this month

Thank-You for your continuing support!!

Don't forget to check the mailing label for your dues date!

## Midwest User Group Computer Conference (Cont'd)

The FVPCA will be looking at another community service project. As mentioned in prior newsletters and at meetings, we will be helping the First Tee project get their computers and systems up to snuff. I will be meeting with Kathryn Farrell and we hope to have a report at our October meeting. We will have a sign-up for any members interesting in helping out. Here is a link to explore: <http://www.thefirstteeaurora.org/Club/Scripts/Home/home.asp>

Please join us for our next general meeting on Saturday October 18<sup>th</sup> at the Civic Center. And as always: bring a friend!

## The "FOX TALES" Newsletter

The "Fox Tales" Newsletter is published monthly by the Fox Valley PC Association, Post Office Box 369, Oswego, IL 60543, a non-profit organization, established to provide information about IBM PCs and IBM Compatible personal computer systems (and almost anything "digital") to our members.

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### Kane County Electronic Recycling Dates for 2008 November 7 & 8, December 12 & 13

#### Location:

Kane Co. Circuit Clerk Office  
540 S. Randall Rd. St.Charles, Il 8:00am-12:00pm

#### Items Accepted for Recycling:

Personal Computers, Monitors, Printers, Scanners, Modems, Tape, Disk, CD Drives, Cables, Keyboards, Mice, Plotters (*Limit of 25 pieces on Towers/CPU's and Monitors*)

Televisions, Camcorders, Cameras, Stereo Equipment (no speakers), Game Players, Joysticks

Telephones, Cell Phones, Pagers, Answering Machines, Typewriters, Calculators, Adding Machines, Fax Machines, Shredders, Copiers, Postage Meters

Electronic Media: Floppy Discs, Compact Discs (and cases), Videotapes, Audio Cassettes)

[www.co.kane.il.us/environment/recycle](http://www.co.kane.il.us/environment/recycle)



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## Fox Valley PC Association Officers & Board Members

### President

Jon Jackman 630-892-7767  
e-mail [jockjoj@aol.com](mailto:jockjoj@aol.com)

### Vice President

Tom Anzalone 630-482-9808  
e-mail [tanzalone2@earthlink.net](mailto:tanzalone2@earthlink.net)

### Secretary

Bill Palmer 630-859-8939  
e-mail [william\\_palmer@att.net](mailto:william_palmer@att.net)

### Treasurer

Richard Chamberlain 630-892-9361  
e-mail [Rsqrd\\_chmb@aol.com](mailto:Rsqrd_chmb@aol.com)

### Newsletter Layout Editor

Dean Holste 630-966-8521  
e-mail [deanholste\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:deanholste(at)sbcglobal.net)

### Membership Coordinator

Bill Powell 630-553-1887  
e-mail [wpmkp81@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wpmkp81@sbcglobal.net)

### Website Webmaster

VACANT  
e-mail:

### Publicity Coordinator

VACANT  
e-mail

### Program Coordinator

Craig McGregor 630-554-1923  
e-mail [Craig.McGregor@ACXIOM.COM](mailto:Craig.McGregor@ACXIOM.COM)

# Fox Tales

Fox Valley PC Association  
P.O. Box 369  
Oswego, IL 60543-0369



The Fox Valley PC Association Web site is:

**[www.fvpca.org](http://www.fvpca.org)**  
Courtesy of APCUG



Have a computer hardware problem or a technical question? Head over to our website and click on the red question mark to send your question! We will research it and have an answer at the next meeting or sooner if needed.

## October Program:

**Review of the Midwest Regional Conference  
With Trial Software**

**By Jon Jackman**

**The Next Meeting Will Be at 9:15 A.M.**

**October 18, 2008**

**At the Oswego Civic Center  
5 Ashlawn Ave. Montgomery, Illinois**