

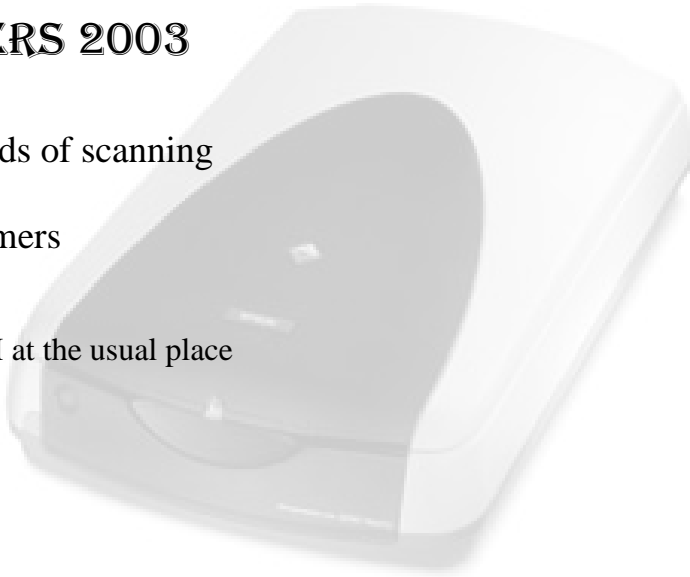
# Bits & Bytes

A Publication of the Kern PC Users Group

## SCANNERS 2003

Odds & Ends of scanning  
by  
Dave Chalmers

Jan 9 at 7PM at the usual place





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# Ants in my Hub

By Paul Lujan by way of an e-mail forward

## [[Article]]

So, last night, I come home after a 4-1/2 hour drive back from LA (note to law enforcement officials: that's a "6" there, (really), and sit down in front of the computer to check my mail. My connection is, for lack of a better word, ass-slow. I go to look at the hub to see if everyone else is having this problem.

Nope, Mike and David's activity lights are busily flickering; it's only me who has been screwed. I reach down to fiddle with the connection, and notice that the hub is covered with ants (as well as my hand, after the fiddling). "That's odd," I think to myself, "what would ants want with our hub?" But I'm way too tired to deal with it at the time, so instead I go to sleep.

I wake up this morning, and decide to investigate further. Yep, the hub is definitely swarming with ants. And it doesn't look like the ants are just going over it to somewhere else (especially since there aren't any tasty ant treats anywhere nearby); they're clearly going into and out

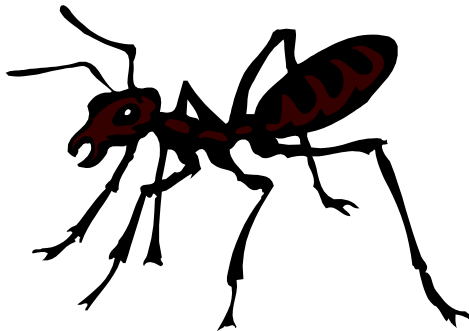
of the hub. Some of the ants going in are even carrying little white pellets. "Is that food?" I wonder. "Where is it coming from?"

I unplug the hub and pick it up, and then kill all of the ants that come out of it. And kill some more ants. And kill some more ants. This goes on for a while. I begin to think that the little white pellets look an awful lot like eggs. I shake the hub, and it sounds like someone has poured a handful of coarse sand into it. "That's odd," I think to myself, "I could have sworn this hub didn't come with the sand option." I initially

thought that there were just some ants here, but it's pretty clear I've got more on my hands now.

So, I decide to take a closer look at the hub. Unfortunately, the hub boasts a screw less

construction, but I know that my screwdrivers can be used for more than merely removing screws, so I start prying. As I do so, a bunch of ants and eggs, as well as what look like larvae (basically, they look like slightly-smaller-than-normal ants, but a very pale brown instead of black) continue to fall out (into the sink, since I've become clever enough to do this over the sink).



I finally get the thing open, and see a bunch of eggs lying on the circuit board, but less than I would have expected if there's really a colony set up here. So, I figure that they're probably under the circuit board, and set to work unscrewing the circuit board to take it out of the box.

Jackpot! (That is, if my goal were to win an ant colony, which it really *\*wasn't\**.) The entire bottom of the box is coated with eggs, and I see a large ant, which I can only assume is the queen. I terminate the queen with extreme prejudice, and then wash out the box (it's made of metal, so I figure it'll be okay.)

The circuit board, on the other hand, I can't just wash off (since I hold hopes of saving the hub, not really wanting to have to drop \$30 on a new one), and there are lots of eggs wedged in small places, like between the link lights or between the chips connected to the ports, where they'll be really hard to get out of. So, I set the circuit board aside for the moment to take a shower.

When I come back, I notice that the ants have actually done me a favor! (Suckers!) In their futile attempts to save the colony, they've picked up the eggs themselves to scurry around like maniacs, solving my problem. I pick off the ants, and then vigorously shake the board to try to dislodge anything still stuck in the ports, and much to my surprise another queen falls out. (I've read that Argentine ants can have

more than one queen per colony, but this is still a surprise, especially since I thought I had already gotten almost everything.) I dispose of her, too, clean up the remaining ants, and figure I might as well try putting the hub back together. Not that I can completely undo my prying, but hey, that's cosmetic anyway.

Much to my surprise, it actually works! And my performance is back from miserable to normal. Ants 0, Me 1.

Man, I hate ants. If I could choose one genus to completely wipe off the Earth, assuming that it wouldn't, like, destroy the ecosystem (but really, what depends on ants? Anteaters? Well, they're not doing a very good job, are they?!), it would be them. Well, okay, I suppose I should probably choose something like mosquitoes, since even though they're less personally annoying to me, they still have the whole large-scale disease-spreading thing. But I'd expect some serious compensation from the WHO for not choosing ants! --*Paul Lujan. Article reproduction coordinated by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group.*§

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.

## Use Your CD Drive More Productively

By Ira Wilsker

Almost all newer computers come with a CD-RW drive, a CD drive that can write and rewrite compatible CD discs. For older computers, with a standard CD reader (play only, not write), the addition of a CD “burner” is a very popular and fairly inexpensive upgrade. A simple review of the Sunday sale books for the major electronics and office supply stores shows an abundance of CD-RW drives for between \$30 and \$100, often after rebate. These drives are typically easy to install, and may possibly be installed in addition to the existing CD reader (good for copying CDs), or as a simple replacement. If internal installation is not desired, there are several external CD-RW drives, advertised weekly, that connect to an available USB or firewire port. The external drives, typically the USB models, are also often a good choice for older notebook computers where internal installation is difficult or impossible. The Sunday ads often show the external USB drives for under \$100, after rebates.

Almost all CD-RW drives, whether factory installed, or after-market add-on, come with some CD burning software. The most widely distributed CD software provided with the drives is from Adaptec, or Adaptec’s successor (Adaptec sold their CD writing software division), Roxio. Another common software package included with some drives is from Nero, while other drives come with a variety of lesser-known software titles. As the price of blank CD discs plunges, often “free after rebate”, burning (writing to) CDs

has become very popular. Still, many PC (and Mac) users are not using their equipment to its potential; large number of users still only use their CD-RW drives in read mode to install other software, and not to burn discs.

As had been stated many times here in previous columns, the three most important words in computing are “Backup, Backup, and Backup”. Remember that “Murphy’s First law of Computing” states that “A properly backed-up hard drive will never fail; a hard drive that has not been recently backed up will always fail at the most inopportune time.” All too many users who have ready access to CD-RW drives have lost all of their important files to viruses or hard drive failures, despite the ease and low expense of copying important files to CD discs. The common blank discs hold from 660 to 700 megabytes of data, and are very inexpensive. Other than some time, there is no great investment to back up critical files at a minimum, or even better, entire hard drives.

There are a variety of excellent utilities available to backup hard drives. Some CD-RW drives come with a “lite” or “limited” version of popular backup programs. While minimally functional, these “lite” versions often lack useful functions such as compression (getting more data on a CD disc than its native capacity), or incremental backup (only backing up new files or files modified since the previous backup). I have been using “BackUp MyPC” from Stomp Software ([www.stompinc.com](http://www.stompinc.com)), which was formerly known as Backup Exec, by Veritas (Seagate). This program is probably one of the most full featured backup programs, and easy to use. BackUp MyPC can backup to almost any type of device from CD-RW drives, tape drives, Jazz and Zip

drives, and other devices. Some competing products are Roxio's Go Back, Norton's Ghost, and NTI's BackUp Now (which I have also used). Since almost all computers can utilize some form of CD writer, and blank discs are cheap, there is absolutely no reason NOT to have at least critical data files backed up. The cliché "ounce of prevention..." is most apropos here. With over one in five PCs currently infected with at least one variety of the Klez worm, several versions of which are capable of destroying critical files on a hard drive, backups are imperative. The appearance and rapid spread of other destructive worms and viruses, such as the new "Hunch" worm which explicitly destroys the files in the Windows, My Programs, and My Documents directories, emphasizes the need for backing up hard drives. Still, probably the most damage is done by the old-fashioned hard drive crash. Remember Murphy's law, and always have a reasonably current backup of critical files. For long-term archival purposes, better quality CD discs are advertised as having a 100-year archival life.

There are other popular uses of CD burners. One of the most popular and most controversial uses is burning music to blank CD discs. Often in the popular MP3 format, or in native commercial music CD format, studies show that this is the most popular use of CD burners. Provided that copyright laws are rigidly obeyed, and we all know that they always are (snicker), homemade music CDs are very widely created and used. Online music or swap services, ranging from the now defunct Napster, to the very much alive and controversial KazAa and Morpheus, as well as the legitimate commercial music sites such as Sony, are popular sources of such music.

Another popular use is copying en-

tire CD discs. Generally, it is considered "ok" to make a single archival backup of commercial CDs, provided that the copy is only used as a backup, and properly disposed of (destroyed) when the original software is no longer needed. With some software CDs, and an increasing number of commercial music CDs, this archival backup is becoming more difficult to create as sophisticated copy protection is being utilized more commonly.

Many use their CD drive, often with rewriteable CD-RW discs, as an additional, but removable adjunct to their hard drive. This allows archival and portable storage of massive amounts of data, at minimal expense. CDs are often ideal for moving large files between computers.

There are several other uses for the CD-RW drives now so common in our machines. Many other CD drive utilities are readily available for download, such as from [tucows.exp.net/system/cdrutil95.html](http://tucows.exp.net/system/cdrutil95.html) or [tucows.exp.net/mmedia.html](http://tucows.exp.net/mmedia.html). Use the drives as they can be used, but make absolutely sure that critical data is frequently backed up.

This article is brought to you by the Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an International organization to which this user group belongs.

## COMPUTER POEM FOR THOSE OVER 30

A computer was something you saw  
on TV  
In a science-fiction show of note,  
WINDOWS were something you  
hated to clean  
And RAM was the cousin of a goat.

MEG was the name of my girlfriend  
And GIG was a job for the nights,  
Now these terms all mean different  
things,  
And that really MEGA-BYTES!

An APPLICATION was for employ-  
ment .  
PROGRAM, a TV show.  
A CURSOR got his mouth washed  
out with soap,  
A KEYBOARD was on a piano.

FILES, you used on your fingernails,  
CHIPS, you ate from a bag,  
And those big plastic sacks that went  
out with the trash  
Were the only things you'd "DROP  
AND DRAG."

BROWSERS were shoppers in depart-  
ment store aisles,  
SPREADSHEETS, you put on your  
bed,

And a YAHOO, I'm sorry to say, was  
a guy  
With very few SMARTS in his head.

MEMORY was something you lost  
with age,  
A CD was a bank account,  
And if you had a 3-INCH FLOPPY,  
You sure hoped nobody found out!

BIOS were stories of famous folks'  
lives,  
BINS... we used them to store grain,  
A CAB was a taxi that took you up-  
town,  
And a LANDING ZONE was for a  
plane.

COMPRESS was something you did  
to the garbage,  
Not something you did to a file,  
And if you UNZIPPED anything in  
public  
You could end up in jail for a while.

LOG ON was adding more wood to  
the fire,  
HARD DRIVE, a long trip on the  
road,  
A MOUSE PAD was where little ro-  
dents lived  
And a BACKUP would foul your  
commode.

GOOGLE was a guy with big funny eyes,  
JUNO, a goddess of Rome,  
And ONLINE was where you waited to board  
The BUS that you'd ride to go home.

A CHAT ROOM was usually my front porch,  
LINKS were what made up a chain,  
And the only SEARCH ENGINE that I ever saw  
Was at the front end of a train!

WAV's were found at the seashore,  
JPEG's came with a tent,  
The RECYCLE BIN was for bottles and cans  
And CACHE was how we paid the rent.

A MAINFRAME supported the roof of your house,  
COOKIES, you ate for dessert,  
A SERVER worked in a restaurant,  
And MUD was just wet, goeey dirt.

A PORT was the place where ships would dock,  
MIME's, performers in shows,  
And HACKERS were people who chopped up trees  
Into LOGS that they stacked up in rows.

CUT was a job for a pocket knife,  
PASTE-- you did that with glue,  
A WEB was the home of a spider,  
And a VIRUS... well, that was the flu.

DRIVERS all worked for the bus line,  
A BAT was used to play ball,  
And WALLPAPER... oh yeah, that was the stuff  
That you actually glued to the wall!

HI MEM, I thought, was a greeting...  
STARTUP, I did to my car,  
And a MENU would help me decide what to order  
When I went to my neighborhood bar.

FAT was something you exercised off,  
PARTITIONS were walls in a room,  
SPAM was found only in sandwiches,  
And CLEANUP was done with a broom.

A TEMP was a part-time employee,  
MIDI, a skirt girls would wear,  
And "ALWAYS ON TOP"... well, that's hard to explain,  
(Better yet, let's not even go there!)

I still use my pen and my paper  
And the memory stored in my head,  
I hear no one's been killed in a com-

puter crash  
But when it happens, they wish they  
WERE dead!

Hey, I'm not knocking computers!  
So please, don't call me a fool!  
I own a PC, which I use every day,  
It's my favorite time-saving tool.

But one thing you should always re-  
member,  
Before you get hooked on Spell-  
Check...  
The greatest computer that ever was  
made  
Is still the one that's attached to your  
NECK!!!

Contributed by Stuart Ree

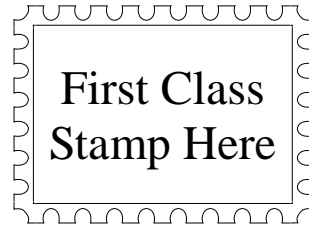
## Midwest Computer Humor?

Friday, we had a tornado drill. We're  
underneath a parking garage and  
there's a PA announcement "This is a  
tornado drill. Please move quickly  
away from all windows."

Somebody yelled out: "Quick, get to a  
DOS prompt!"

Contributed by Caroline Corser





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*We are on the web at*  
**WWW.KIPUG.ORG**

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**Sarah Perelli-Minetti Webmaster**

Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month  
at the Kern Superintendent of Schools Building.  
17th and L streets Downtown  
Meeting Time is 7 pm