November Meeting:
NANCY CHRISTOLEAR
Open Source Software

IT WAS ALMOST A QUARTER–CENTURY AGO — June 1986. The venerable CP/M Operating System was dead, though its corpse was still warm. Ryugen Fisher, Editor of a CP/M users' group newsletter, gloomily surveyed the field. "No Virginia," he sorrowfully predicted, "there are not going to be many public domain programs with free source codes, in either 8–bit OR* 16–bit. The hackers of recent history have discovered that they have to eat, too. And source code doesn't come with a program any more than Green Stamps come with gasoline — not any more." A colorful character from Wisconsin, Mr. Fisher died in 2006. (Click here for an obit.)

His forecast was wrong. The Golden Age of Open Source lay in the future. Firefox, the leading alternative to Internet Explorer, GIMP (a graphics editor), Audacity (an audio editor), and of course the Linux OS are all free and open source. One of the best known open source applications, Open Office, is a cross platform word processor, spreadsheet, slide and database application that is compatible with many proprietary applications. DMA Treasurer **Nancy Christolear** will discuss what Open Source is, and why not all software that is available free of charge is considered Open Source. She will also present a selection of high quality Open Source applications available for the Windows OS, using the OpenDisc Project. Copies of the OpenDisc will be available to DMA members or you can download the ISO from the website and burn your own copy. As always, our meetings are free and open to the public — bring a friend!

* Mr. Fisher's printer didn't support italics.

The Dayton Microcomputer Association®, Inc.

Post Office Box 4005
Dayton, Ohio 45401

Established in 1976, DMA is a group of Dayton–area professionals and hobbyists in the field of computing and information technology. General membership meetings are usually on the last Tuesday of each month. DMA has a number of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in areas ranging from digital photography and geneology to the Linux operating system. Each SIG meets according to its own schedule. DMA is a member of APCUG and ASC. (Click on any of the logos — including our own — to go to that organization's Home Page.)

Officers and Board of Trustees

Submissions ...

The Databus welcomes compliments, complaints, suggestions, and especially articles. We can accept articles in ASCII, or as attachments in Microsoft Word or Works, Open Office Writer, Word Perfect, or even WordStar! No PDF files, please. Send e–mails to:
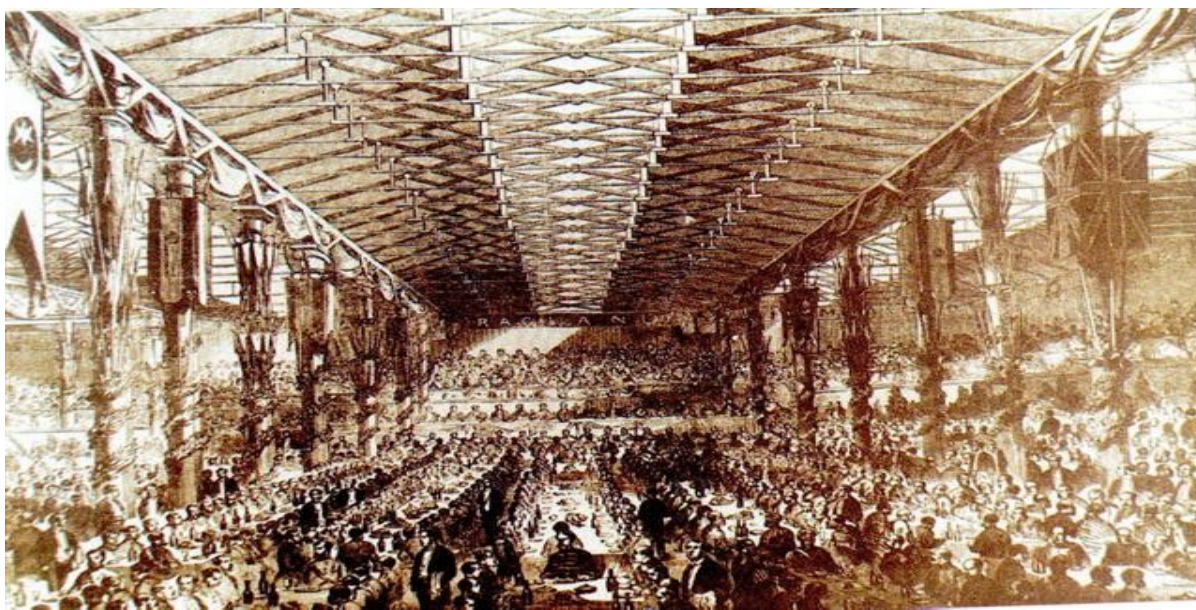
Editor@DMA.org

All articles are subject to editing for spelling, grammar, usage, and space. Always retain a copy of your work, as The Databus cannot be responsible for loss. When articles are of roughly equal quality, those by paid–up DMA members receive preference.

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The Editor of *The Data Bus* sometimes comments on articles. Such comments are enclosed in square brackets [like this] and have " — *TDB* Editor" at the end. Spelling and grammar corrections are not noted.

IN & AROUND DMA

Annual Holiday Dinner!
December 14 — $26 per person

WELL, IT MIGHT NOT BE QUITE AS CROWDED as the picture above, but the Holiday season is upon us, and DMA's annual shindig will take place on **Tuesday, 14 December,** at the **Knights of Columbus Hall, 267 Bainbridge Street, Dayton 45402** (near the Main Post Office on 5th Street). Click here for a map. Cocktails and drinks (cash bar) served at 6:00 P.M., and dinner begins at 7:00. Menu to be announced, but there will be a round of beef where you can get your meat custom–cut (rare, medium, or well–done). Tickets are available at the November meeting this Tuesday. More information here.

Video & Graphics for Windows 7

by VINNY LA BASH, Regular Columnist, Sarasota (Florida) PCUG *Monitor*
 http://www.spcug.org, labash (at) spcug.org

ENGAGE ANTI-ALIASING! Activate the anisotropic filters! Fire the vertical sync generators! Is that Han Solo shouting orders to Chewbacca in a heroic effort to fend off Darth Vader and his evil galactic empire? No, it's "geek speak" for language that was never meant to confuse us — but often does, and anyone with a personal computer less than a few years old should know what these terms mean.

Before we explain, let's talk about flat panel displays and something called "native resolution." Flat panel monitors are far superior to cathode ray tube (CRT) displays. Now that flat panels have remarkable color reproduction, incredibly sharp pictures, and prices lower than a snake's hip pockets, one would be hard pressed to justify a CRT purchase. Even if you wanted a CRT, try finding one in stores these days. Flat panel displays are designed for a fixed resolution, which is commonly called the "native resolution." For example, a flat panel with a native resolution of 1600 x 1200 pixels cannot display any other resolution without degrading image quality. If you force your flat panel to a different resolution, it has to scale the image by a process called interpolation, which is the primary cause of lower quality images. What we're saying here is don't try to change the native resolution of your flat panel monitor, and make sure that your video drivers are up–to–date. Let's now turn to the main topic: getting the best pictures and videos your graphics chips can provide.

Anti–Aliasing

Anti-aliasing is a technique that minimizes visual distortions in curved and diagonal shapes. The amount of distortion varies with the size of the pixels on a display. When anti–aliasing is turned on, it reduces the number of stair–stepped jumps from one column of pixels to the next. Most people know this effect as the "jaggies." The advantage of this technique is that images tend to look more realistic. The downside is that your system will take a performance hit. It's almost always worth the hit to have anti–aliasing turned on. Some systems will only allow you to turn anti–aliasing on or off. More advanced systems will let you adjust the degree of anti–aliasing. If your system is powerful enough and your graphics controls allow you to adjust the degree of anti-aliasing, crank it up to the max.

Anisotropic Filtering (AF)

If anisotropic filtering is turned off, your graphics and video may look as if they are being viewed by someone in need of a cataract operation. The more distant the object, the more blurry it looks. Without getting into technical details, anisotropic filtering makes hair look like hair, fur look like fur, and textured surfaces look the way they do in real life. With anisotropic filtering turned on, these objects are not only recognizable, but crisp and well defined, like abs on a body builder. That's the good news. The better news is that your system suffers very little in terms of performance. Turn it on and keep it on.

Vertical Synchronization (V–Sync)

V–Sync prevents a condition called "screen tearing," where information from two successive video frames is shown as a single image. It shows up most often when the video image moves horizontally, such as a camera pan in a move or a side scrolling video game. V–sync works by stopping the video card from putting another image in the display memory until after the monitor has finished its current refresh cycle. For V–sync to work properly, it's important that your display refresh rate be set to manufacturer's specifications. The downside to V–sync is that it subjects your system to a performance hit, but unless you're dealing with high end video applications or 3–D games, this should not be a problem for most systems.

Shadow Quality

Shadow quality is a relatively recent addition to graphics capabilities. It's used mainly in games to make shadows appear realistic, create atmosphere, and draw players into the scene. Few things can destroy a mood faster than a distorted shadow in a role playing game. It's tough to take the game seriously when shadows look cartoonish, or downright wrong.

For the best images, max out your lighting and shadow effects. Scenes come alive and make the game very realistic. It may not always be a good thing when you're competing in a multi–player match. Turn it off in those situations or your opponents may have better frame rates than you.

Texture Quality

You wouldn't buy a brand new car and scrape off the paint. It will still be a smooth ride, but the car will look like scrap metal. With texture quality set low or turned off completely, surfaces can lose their detail and appear featureless. Texture detail doesn't cause your graphics circuitry to hyperventilate, so you gain a lot by turning it on. As long as your graphics memory is at least 512MB, you won't see any noticeable performance degradation by bringing it up to full strength.

Understanding these features will allow you to configure your system for outstanding visuals. As long as you have the latest drivers for your video components and enough video RAM, there is no reason why you shouldn't reward yourself with the best images your system can produce.

TAKE A SHORTCUT IN EXCEL: If you use Excel frequently, you're probably already familiar with many basic Excel keyboard shortcuts. However, there are some little–known shortcuts that can help you work even more efficiently in selecting ranges and moving around a worksheet. For example, you can quickly select an entire data region (a range of data cells bordered by empty cells) by clicking one of the cells and then holding down CTRL–SHIFT–* (asterisk). Another way to select a data range is to place your cell pointer in the range and then press CTRL–A; press CTRL–A a second time to select the entire worksheet. You can also press CTRL–Spacebar to select the column where your cell pointer is located. Yet another helpful keyboard shortcut is to press END followed by an Up, Down, Left, or Right arrow key to move the cell pointer efficiently to the outermost edge of a data range.

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Any paid–up DMA member is entitled to a business card–sized advertisement *free* in every issue of THE DATABUS.

DMA members receive a 5% discount — just show your membership card. (Special orders excluded.)

Click anywhere on the advertisement for P3's Web site.

The DealsGuy

by BOB (The Cheapskate) CLICK, Greater Orlando (Florida) Computer Users Group

Miscellaneous Comments

I'm catching up on reading the newsletters I receive. I print them out on my Ricoh color laser so it's easier for me to read, and I noticed that the colored pictures I printed before the cartridges ran out were fine, but when I replaced the printer cartridges, the new pictures I printed had lines. Since then, it seems to have improved and some small pictures printed OK. After last month's comment, several readers advised me it was probably dirt on the drum. Perhaps something ended up on the drum on the bottom of the cartridge when I changed it, and is working it way off, I really don't know. I haven't found anything in the manual about cleaning it. [In light of recent events, I could have inserted a "wise–guy" remark about that toner cartridge, but prudently refrained from doing so. —*TDB* Editor]

I haven't heard how the FACUG cruise in January of 2011 is shaping up. We're still considering it, but it looks like we won't make it. Last year's FACUG cruise was a highlight for me. Some are leaving this cruise out because it's one day longer and costs more. Actually, I don't mind the extra day, in spite of the extra cost, because shopping at Cozumel is great and there will be no sessions that afternoon. The ship is better and Royal Caribbean is one of my favorite cruise lines. If your favorite SIG is the PIG SIG, Royal Caribbean's food selection is exceptional.

One of the most interesting things about reading many user group newsletters is that some have regular articles, written by a member, that are always outstanding, but that's the only place it's published, unless an editor has seen it and uses it in their own newsletter. I once told Judy Taylour [That's the way she spells it! —*TDB* Editor] that I would like to recommend a few outstanding authors that I see each month so the entire nation could read their material, but it never came to pass because she already had plenty of items for her PUSH collections. There is certainly a wealth of great articles available to editors now.

Loss Of Another User Group

I received a message from Lou Vitale, President of Macon Users Group in Macon, GA, telling the members that the Board of Directors had decided it was no longer logical to keep the group alive. It must have taken him a while to put that final letter together, but I disagree that they no longer have anything to offer the members. As usual, only a few people were willing to do the work, and they probably got tired of working while others simply enjoyed the benefits. Yes, they do have almost nothing new to present that they haven't already done, but nothing can replace a member's coming in with his machine in hand that has a problem, or stating his problem during the Q & A, and after a short discussion, his problem is most likely diagnosed. The Internet might have

the answers, but who is going to explain it to you, except, perhaps, your grand kids? In the meantime, some malware or key loggers might infect your machine, and God help you if that happens. The Internet can only help if you understand what you're reading and know what you're doing, and that's where a user group comes in. The members that weren't active in the group's work will be the real losers.

Lou Vitale was one of my favorite authors and I'll surely miss his writings. I have to think that if I looked at that message closely, I would see a few tearstains (confirmed by Lou). Lizzz [That's the way she spells it! —*TDB* Editor] Russell also wrote interesting articles, and I have sometimes quoted from both authors. If you would like to read Lou's closing letter sent to the members, check my Web site, where you'll find a link to read it http://www.dealsguy.com Their Web site is already shut down.

As for their running out of presentations, I sometimes read about what was likely an interesting presentation from a source you might not consider. Most user group officers feel that everything should be computer related, but I don't necessarily agree with that. One group said they were having a local TV weather forecaster come in to demonstrate the use of computers in weather forecasting. Recently, another User Group had two guys come in from an HH Gregg store who did a presentation on 3D TVs. They answered many questions, and wowed the attendees with the live demonstration of 3D TV. They passed around the two pair of glasses they had so everyone got a chance to see this impressive demonstration with their own eyes. I know I was impressed. It was a job bringing the large screen TV and other equipment to do it. One slip and that large screen could have been shattered. Since I wear glasses, it's awkward for me to put the 3D glasses over my own pair.

The Post Office also has some unique operations that are somewhat computer related. Other utilities might also have presentations. I'd like to see a presentation by the city or county explaining the computer that controls the traffic lights around town. The one installed locally cost over a million for the installation and cables were strung all over the area. However, in my opinion, they still don't work right. I've stopped many times for no one and it makes no sense that the traffic light can't "see" in this age of technology.

Still Good

Don't forget that the special discount on the KeyStone Learning Systems' learning courses is still good for December, so it's not too late to order if you haven't gotten around to getting a learning course you need. Robert Hodges has set up a 20% discount for my readers, and that's off *any* single user course until 12/31/10. When purchasing, use the coupon code "DealsGuy" when placing your order. You are also welcome to use your credit card.

Will The *Real* Security Stand Up?

Trying to secure our computers is an ongoing challenge, but I didn't realize how tough it is becoming for everyone until I read this article in *Information Week.* In some ways, this article leaves you wondering if it's even possible to protect your computers properly any more. This article is lengthy and written for professionals, but quite informative:

http://www.informationweek.com/news/security/antivirus/showArticle.jhtml?
articleID=227700363&queryText=Greg%20Shipley

Perhaps a secure machine is impossible, but it also boils down to an alert computer operator. [Free, but requires registration to read the entire article. —*TDB* Editor]

More On Safe Web Surfing

Finjan SecureBrowsing http://securebrowsing.finjan.com/ is a browser extension that checks links in search results and Web sites. Each link is marked as safe (green) or potentially dangerous (red). SecureBrowsing warns users about potential threats before they click on search results, or other links on web pages, allowing them to explore the Web safely. This service helps the user make intelligent choices when surfing the Web, with fewer security worries.

Finjan SecureBrowsing performs real–time code analysis of the current content on each of the rated Web pages, and potentially malicious and undesirable behaviors are automatically detected, even if they have never been categorized.

According to their Web site, while browsing the Web, you come across numerous sites that use Active Content to enhance your Web experience and capabilities. Active Content supports capabilities such as changing images when the mouse moves over them, popping up windows, displaying advertisements, and supporting advance design elements. Unfortunately, these capabilities can also be used by hackers to change your system settings, or even install spyware applications. Finjan SecureBrowsing alerts you, before you visit these pages, to any potential malicious Active Content, allowing you to enjoy a wealth of Web capabilities without jeopardizing your PC and private information.

Finjan SecureBrowsing also identifies potentially malicious code such as spyware, hacking code, viruses, and code that tampers with your PC system settings. Such malicious code can even try to steal your private user name and passwords when you visit your online banking Web site. Finjan SecureBrowsing identifies all of these threats in real time by analyzing the behavior of certain active content that could be used maliciously (such as JavaScript, VB Script, ActiveX and Java applets). Download this browser add–on at http://securebrowsing.finjan.com/ I read about this in Charlotte Bytes, newsletter for Charlotte County Computer Group Corporation:

http://www.cccgc.net

Their newsletter always has great content and one of the members told the editor about this one.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site soon that didn't offer discounts. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click bobclick at bellsouth dot net. Visit my Web site at http://www.dealsguy.com

SKIP A BULLET OR NUMBER IN MICROSOFT WORD: There can be times when you're working with a bulleted or numbered list when you want to add a new line without tacking on a number or bullet. Perhaps you want to add a parenthetical note below an entry without making it part of your list. If you hold SHIFT and press ENTER, Word will add a new line to your list without a bullet a number. When you want to resume numbering or bulleting, don't hold the SHIFT key any longer.

SAVE THE PAGE: If you're using Internet Explorer and you come across a Web page with information you want to preserve, there are two good ways to keep the information without having to use a Web browser to bring it back up. The first and simplest way is to print it; it never hurts to have a hard copy of information you need. Another method is to save the Web page as an .MHT (Multipurpose Internet Mail Extension) file, which is essentially just a snapshot of the page. In this format you can send the page to others or double-click on it to open it directly. To make a .MHT file from a Web page, click File (press the ALT key to reveal the File menu if you don't see it), click Save As, and in the dialog box be sure to select the .MHT file type. Tell the computer where to put the file and click Save.

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DMA Membership Application/Renewal

PLEASE ALLOW UP TO THREE WEEKS FOR APPLICATION PROCESSING AND INTERNET SET–UP

Name: _____ Birth date:_____/_____/_____
                                                                                  mo.   day   year

Associate Name: _____ Birth date:_____/_____/_____
                                                                                 mo.   day   year

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (Home) (_____) _____-_____ (Work) (_____) _____–_____**x**_____

I wish to have my name and address published in the club roster: YES ❑   NO ❑

E–mail address: _____@_____

Name of DMA member who recruited me: _____ (only new regular memberships)

Are you a current or recent DMA Member? Yes ❑   No ❑   Change of Address only? ❑ Today's date: _____/_____/_____

If you are renewing, please give your Membership Number (from your membership card) _____

Type of Membership

Application is for: New Membership ❑   Membership Renewal   ❑   Associate Membership* ❑

If applying for free student membership, please give school name and student ID number: Available only for students under 22 years old.

School Name: _____ Student ID#: _____

* A family or associate membership is an additional membership for a member of your immediate family or someone else who is living in the member's household. If this is a family or associate membership, give name of regular member:

Dues/Fees (Dues and Fees are subject to change without prior notice):

Membership (one year — New or Renewal)	1.) ❑ $25.00	
Family or Associate Membership (must live at same address as regular member)	2.) ❑ $12.50	
Free* Student Membership for students under 22 yrs of age. (Student Members *cannot* vote in DMA elections.)	3.) ❑ FREE	
Please assign me a user ID for E–mail and Usenet news access	4.) ❑ $10.00 one–time setup fee for new E–mail accounts.	

<div style="border:1px solid red">

❑   Cash
❑   Check

Check # _____

—New!—
Pay your dues using Pay Pal.® Instructions in the January issue.

</div>

Total - - - Lines (1 and 2) (+4 if checked)   5) $_____

Make your check payable to Dayton Microcomputer Association, Inc. (DMA), and then send the check and application to:
           ➤   PO Box 340402, Beavercreek, OH 45434–0402

DMA Use only: Membership # _____ Exp. Date: ____/____/____ Processed by: _____

REV: 30 October 2010

Calendar (corrected to 27 November 2010)

Dayton Microcomputer Association
Events for December 2010
For additions or corrections, contact Dave Lundy

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 7:00pm Genealogy SIG	3	4 3:00-5:00pm Classic Computers
5	6 7:00pm DMA Board of Trustees	7 6:30pm Dayton Diode 7:00pm Amateur Radio SIG	8 7:00pm Dayton Dynamic Languages Users Group	9	10	11
12	13	14 6:00pm DMA Holiday Dinner	15	16 7:00pm Linux SIG	17	18 3:00-5:00pm Classic Computers
19	20 7:00pm Apple Dayton SIG	21 Winter Solstice 7:00pm Software Development SIG	22	23 Digital Photography SIG con buena	24	25 Christmas Day
26	27	28 No DMA Mtg mtg - Enjoy the holidays	29	30	31	

Month: December ▾ Year: 2010 Type: Table ▾

[Last Month] [Next Month]

Click anywhere on the calendar for the most recent version.

Press Ctrl Shift + to rotate the document clockwise.
Press Ctrl Shift - to rotate counterclockwise.