

MEMBERS NOTICE BOARD

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LIBRARY BOOK

Available to loan

“Microsoft Office 2000
At a Glance”

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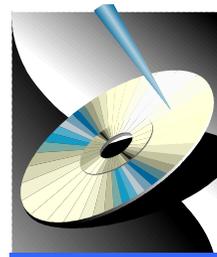
by Mark Parisi

www.offthemark.com



Hot Key is published on the first Wednesday of every month. This edition was compiled using Microsoft Publisher 2000 and reproduced on an Epson Stylus C80 colour ink jet printer and a Epson Stylus 880 colour ink jet printer.

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HOT KEY

ISLE OF WIGHT PC USER GROUP

www.iwpcug.org

MONTHLY JOURNAL

Issue 132 – November 2002



Dennis Parkes with John 'Buzz' Austin at the “Loading Operating Systems” talk at Riverside Centre

Our members were treated to two interesting talks by the two Denny's during October. Dennis Linzmaier informed us in his talk on the IOW Council Computing that the number of computers throughout the Council offices amounted to approx. 1600. Denny is part of the Council Computing Helpdesk team. The Council has 2 firewalls and networked computers (4 people). The councillors use crypto cards, where you press a button, which generates a number for security purposes. The IOW Council is working towards an E-Government system where eventually one will be able to book a wedding, register a birth and

complain about a noise disturbance over the Internet.

Dennis Parkes worked hard to present three computers complete with their own monitor and tower case together with three operating systems, namely Windows XP, Windows Me and Windows 98. He explained the differences between the three systems and showed our members how to install the operating systems. The Windows XP machine was the first to install in spite of the fact that it was the biggest file system with Windows 98 following closely behind. Windows Me was the slowest and was considered the poor relation of the three. All three systems had the same specs in a Pentium 166MHz.

In This Issue

Future Meetings	2
Editorial	4
Humour	5
Windows XP	6-7
Digital Camera	8-9
Q & A	10-12
Download Software	13
Prize Puzzle	14
Computability	15
Notice Board	16

FUTURE MEETINGS

6th November	Disk Partitioning, Copying and Disk Swapping	Bob Groom
20th November	Simple Database and Mail Merge	Dennis Linzmaier
4th December	Making a Website with FrontPage	Liam Thom
18th December	Christmas Party	
8th January	Taking the lid off Windows	To be arranged
22nd January	Computers and Music	John White
5th February	Annual General Meeting/Cheese & Wine Social	
19th February	Family History Software	Tony Elgar (IOW Family History Society)
5th March	Windows Multimedia	Andy Martch Island Computers
2nd April	Video Editing	Noel Stimpson

We also have two e-group discussion areas:-
 Yahoo iwpcusers: iwpcusers@yahoo.com
 and for web designers:
IWPCUG-Web-group@yahoo.com



Dennis Linzmaier at the IOW Council Computing meeting at Riverside

The method is to examine the position of the two hands relative to the hour markers. One is $\frac{3}{5}$ th of the way between the hours and the other is $\frac{4}{5}$ th. $\frac{3}{5}$ th of an hour is 36 minutes which would put the other hand $\frac{1}{5}$ th way between the hour markers. But the other hand is not in such a position. $\frac{4}{5}$ th of an hour is 48 minutes, making the other hand $\frac{3}{5}$ th between the hour markers, which it is. That determines which hand is which. The numerals are then defined by the fact that the hour marker anticlockwise from the minute hand must be 45 minutes which corresponds to the 9th hour. All the other numerals then fall into place and the time must be 10:48.

I received 6 correct answers. They were from Colin Rowe, Rosemary West, John Moxon, Roger Brown, John Underwood and Ken Cameron. John Moxon won the draw and the £5 book token.

Well done. It wasn't difficult, was it?

Computability IW visit to KeyTools Conference 17/10/2002

John "Buzz" Austin and I attended the KeyTools conference in Winchester on 17/10/2002. This comprised a light lunch, four lectures and presentations and discussion. We were addressed first by Dr Geoff Busby of the Disability Section of the British Computer Society who described the so called medical model of approach to disability (in which we try to fix the disabled) and the "social" model where society's shortcoming in facilitating disabled people is remedied. He also talked about the Disability Discrimination Act which goes a very long way to placing the social model in the forefront. For instance, all web sites will be required by law to be disability friendly.

Mike Day spoke about the way government Job Centres can work with employers to facilitate the employment of disabled people, sharing costs, expertise and obligations. He demonstrated example items of IT equipment used in this field - Braille readers and translators, text reading machines, paging devices, a "Parrot" voice managed organiser and calendar, etc.

John Niven of the host organisation showed examples of his product range and provided catalogues and demo disks of the disability software provided. Large format keyboards, various mice and other gadgets.

IW Computability is affiliated to ITCH (IT Can Help) and they were represented by Bob Twitchin. Bob explained how the founder, Ken Stoner, attempted in 1994 to make generally available the benefits he was very fortunate to receive because of his own IT background and his son who provided switch operated software similar to that other well know motor neurone disease sufferer, Steven Hawking. ITCH is a project of the British Computer Society and as an affiliate your own Computability organisation is included in the ITCH statistics.

We made good contacts with a number of other delegates, and Buzz's suggestion of a BCS disability friendly web page template to Dr Busby seems likely to be adopted. This will be a great help to web designers floundering under the new requirements.

Roger Skidmore - rogerskid@supanet.com - <http://www.quaystreet.org.uk>



PRIZE PUZZLE CORNER
NOVEMBER 2002
 by David Broughton



The puzzle this month is on the Hot Key cover disk. It is called SNAKE. The executable file is named SNAKE.EXE which is a DOS program you can run in Windows with the Run command (obtained from the Start Menu), or you can run it from a DOS prompt. But simplest of all, just double click the file named SNAKE.EXE.

The program is on the club's web site (www.iwpcug.org) under the "Hot Key Puzzle" menu item. A copy of the club's web site is on the Cover CD, so you can get it either way.

The game is for one player. It is similar to a game you can find on some mobile phones. The general idea is to guide a snake (moving at a constant speed) left/right/up/down over an area where two forms of food are placed randomly: a mouse and a bird. The mouse scores one point and the bird scores four. Both extend the length of the snake one unit.

The game ends when the snake tries to eat itself. All required information is on the playing screen. The result is a score plus a security code of two letters.

Send your highest score with security code to me, David Broughton (see page 3 for address), to arrive by 4th December to be entered into the prize draw. Highest score wins. A draw will take place in the event of a tie.

Solution to the August Puzzle



The above clock was shown without the numerals and names of the two hands, which are identical. You had to work out the time shown on the clock.

continued on page 15

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Moderators: David Broughton & Rob Webb

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Moderator: David Broughton



I decided to upgrade my existing computer with a new motherboard in the form of an Abit KD7 with DDR400, USB2 and AGP 8x, an AMD 2Gb XP processor and the new 256Mb 400MHz PC3200 184Pin DDR-RAM plus an AMD 2.2Gb cooler. But what a learning curve it turned out to be. Firstly the computer didn't like the PC3200 RAM, which I had to return and bought a 256Mb PC2700 RAM from Tailored Systems in Newport. Secondly the processor seemed to be faulty as when the computer warmed up the system froze. I contacted Eclipse Mail Order, who kindly informed me to return the motherboard and processor for checking. A good example as to why one should buy computer components locally as the return parcel cost £6.45.

A member of IWPCUG, namely George Wilson, has supplied a list of some useful websites:-

New Web-site:- www.communityneighbourhood.co.uk is dedicated to support voluntary and non-profit making organisations. You will find info on training opportunities together with free resources, materials and services which you can download or order from the 'Products' section.

More Useful Web-sites

The Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) advises the Minister for Transport on accessibility. Visit their web-site at:- www.dptac.gov.uk

New online free first aid training programme courtesy of the BBC, British Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance/St. Andrew's Ambulance Assn. (www.bbc.co.uk/health/first_aid_action), which helps users to learn vital first aid at their own pace through a 10-step course. Ideal for beginners or those wanting to brush up on rusty skills.

Law Works for community groups provides free legal services to not-for-profit organisations working in the community. For info on the Solicitors Pro Bono Group Project or to download an application form, visit web-site:- www.probonogroup.org.uk - Tel. 020 79295601.

Useful Reference Publication

Voluntary But Not Amateur: *A Guide to the Law for Voluntary Organisations and Community Groups* by Duncan Forbes, Ruth Hayes, Jackie Reason and Steve Simpson (illustrator), published by London Voluntary Service Council (Tel. 020 77008107 - email: ivsc@ivsc.org.uk)



Newport, 7.30 - 9.30 pm.

The first Wednesday has usually a formal talk whilst the third Wednesday is more informal, geared to the new user and aims to help out members with specific problems.

Membership is £12 per year.

Visitors are welcome.

This journal, "HOTKEY", is printed every month. If you would like to know more about us, either come along to one of our meetings or contact one of our Committee Members listed on page 3.

The Isle

of Wight PC User Group welcomes all owners and users of IBM Compatible Personal Computers. It is a group which seeks to exchange ideas and new information. Our meetings are bi-monthly on **Wednesdays of each month at The Riverside Centre,**



Software for the Thrifty

by Bryant Owen
Bryantowen@hotmail.com



Download Accelerator Plus

I've been thinking about trying something to speed up my downloading. I had my eye on several "accelerators" and thought I'd give Download Accelerator Plus (DAP) from SpeedBit a try. Download Accelerator Plus (DAP) 5.3 from SpeedBit, an Israeli company, has been one of the most popular accelerators on the freeware/shareware scene. SpeedBit claims 50 million users have registered for Download Accelerator Plus (DAP) and it's rated at #15 on the Top 100 Download list at TUCOWS. It looked like a winner and so I decided to download the Basic version of DAP. I liked what I saw of DAP at the SpeedBit site.

Three features I particularly liked, besides speeding up downloads was being able to "save" the download link and download later, the ability to stop and resume downloading and compatibility with virus-checking software.

DAP Basic is free but ad supported (Adware). For the most part, the ads are for SpeedBit products and aren't distracting. (SpeedBit volunteered to supply me with the full version when they found out I was doing a review of DAP) DAP Premium* is about USD \$30 and allows faster acceleration rates, no adware, choice of "skins", and a few other advanced features.

Installation and set up are straightforward and almost all the tweaks are located in the Downloads/Options window. Go through the list carefully. You'll probably want to integrate DAP into your browser. I'd recommend using a "Download" folder and set DAP to use it. Be sure you're set for mirror searches. I'd recommend enabling Virus checking.

That's about it. When you go to a site and want to download a file DAP will engage. Unless you've disabled the download window it should pop up and ask if you want Regular or Accelerate. When you ask for Accelerate the Download File Info window appears and commences to download the software.

Our thanks to The Kwartha Computer Club for this info



Question: What is the difference between a Palm OS machine and a Pocket PC?

Answer: Actually, what you're asking is almost like asking what is the difference between a Macintosh and a PC! The Palm and Pocket PC operating systems are each made by different companies. Microsoft makes the Pocket PC operating system and 3Com makes the Palm operating system. To me Palm OS machines are mostly just an advanced contact management system. They are great for business users who need to keep a list of contacts, to-do lists and the occasional note, all for a pretty low price. If you need a little more power, then you are looking for the Pocket PC. With the Pocket PC you can work on Word and Excel documents, listen to music, watch videos, plus much more. You can do all the contact management that you can do with a Palm Pilot, along with surfing the Internet. Both units now sport handy expansion slots - the difference, however, is the types of devices you can put in those expansion slots. Most of them can support modems, network cards, wireless cards and GPS adaptors, but the variety is a little more limited on the Palm. In my opinion, if you are looking for a quick and easy way to manage your contacts and have a few games, then get a Palm Pilot. If you are looking for the power of a laptop (but don't want to carry a laptop), then I would say the Pocket PC is for you.

Question: Where can I find out how my PC boots up? By that, I mean what steps it goes through, what files it uses, and the order in which it uses them.

Answer: A great Web site for learning how just about anything works is **howstuffworks.com**, and this holds true for computers and booting up. If you are using a Windows operating system then you can also find most of this type of information in the Microsoft MCSE Training series books. The Windows 2000 Professional book does a very good job of outlining the boot process. Also, most A+ Certification books outline the boot process and provide a nice handy technical reference that may help you with other computer questions. If you aren't running a Microsoft operating system, then I recommend you look into a book based on your operating system, as this will have more specific information than the A+ Certification book will.

Our thanks to Chris Pirillo at www.lockergnome.com for the above advice

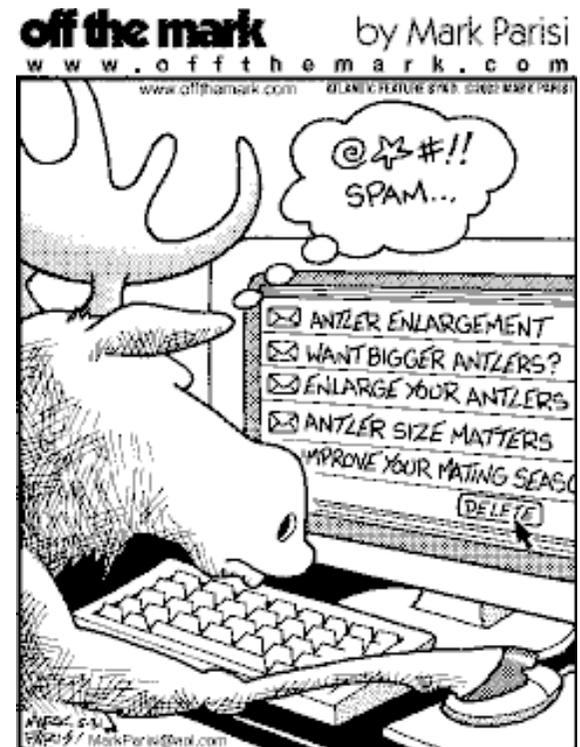
PC Advisor TIPS & TRICKS

Available at your local newsagent is the 2nd issue of Tips & Tricks Magazine with over 600 tips for every PC including hardware troubleshooting, software secrets and Internet tweaks. Included with the magazine is an excellent CD with many utilities, plus a competition to win an Olympus digital camera. (Price £3.99)

The first issue is also available for £4.99, which also comes with a cover CD packed with full programs, freeware and Internet pop-up stoppers. See the following website for more information:-

www.pcadvisor.co.uk

H U M O U R





Windows XP: As Good as it Gets

by Steve Bass, Pasadena IBM Users Group

Beefing about an operating system is therapeutic. Believe me, I've done lots, saving regular visits to my shrink. But my complaining has almost bottomed out since I made the full-time switch to Windows XP Pro. You caught that, right? I said almost. The reason is that even though I'm wildly pleased with XP, there are still a few features—and loose ends—I don't like. I'll describe a few of them in this and subsequent columns, and show you how XP has built-in ways to make the changes. (Of course, that's one of my primary beefs — finding the spots to modify XP isn't obvious and requires digging.) To play fair, I have to warn you that I'll also do some proselytising. I'm going to do my best to win you over, so to speak, for your own good. That's because once you get over the hassle of Product Activation, and Microsoft's annoying single license policy, I really think your computing experience will increase substantially.

I need another soapbox minute or two. Many of the PC World letters I receive complain, sometime bitterly, of a Microsoft conspiracy to force you into upgrading your system. Readers go on to say that in order to use XP, they'll need to replace some of their devices (printers seem to be the first one not to work), or stop using old, 16-bit programs written for Win 95. I'll concede and agree with many of the readers that Microsoft should have done a better job with previous Windows versions, then we wouldn't be stuck in the corner having to upgrade. But the reality is that if you want a slick operating system, one that's likely to make your computing day smoother and our workday more productive, you'll have to upgrade. [Set Soapbox to Off].

No More Stinkin' Crashes

You probably know that XP is a pretty interface hung on Windows 2000's architecture, so it resists crashes extraordinarily well. That's true for XP but not necessarily for programs that still plow headfirst into the bit bucket. For instance, Eudora, my e-mail program, locks up when I try embedding what it considers a too large image into a message. And Internet Explorer also has a way of choking and freezing on some sites, doing its best to imitate a deer in headlights.

With Win 9x, the Eudora and IE crash could bring the system down; even if it didn't, I'd reboot to clear out any leftover holes in memory. Win XP contains the crash and stops it from contaminating the rest of the system. Using Control - Alt - Delete, the three-finger, soft-boot salute, calls up Task manager, one of XP's shining lights. Click on the toasted app. and it's history.

continued on page 7



On the Access Control tab, blob 'Share-level access control' (It is probably already blobbed).

Click OK and Reboot when asked.

Repeat the process on the second computer.

You now have a belt and braces peer-to-peer network (assuming you have fitted the cable) :) Belt and Braces because the NetBEUI protocol should take care of everything on a peer-to-peer network but TCP/IP can be useful under some circumstances - but that's another story.

Windows Explorer will now show 'Network Neighbourhood' at the bottom. Click the plus alongside it and every other plus which appears until you see the name which you allocated.

You will need to set up some 'Sharing' on both C drives, in order to drag and drop files from one to the other. Just right click on C and select Sharing. On the PC with the printer, you will need to click 'Start' 'Settings' 'Printers' and right click the printer - select 'Sharing', blob 'Shared As' and enter a name. On the PC without the attached printer, you will need to click Start, Settings Printers and double-click Add Printer. Follow the instructions, selecting 'Network Printer' along the way.

Networking USB devices is not, to the best of my knowledge, possible. If you find a way of doing it, it will be your turn

COMPUTER QUIP

A computer can work out a complicated mathematical computation in a few minutes
— a job that would take a human mind many years to complete.

How does it do this?

It makes everything up.

Who's going to spend years checking it?

Dave Barry



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question

Many people have more than one computer, having bought another to try and keep up with the ever advancing technology and the demands of new applications and programmes. I am one such person. So, the spare has little value and rather than leaving it doing nothing, I thought that it would be useful to connect the two together in a way that would enable me to access files from one to the other and transfer files across. Also to share printers and scanners. It could also act as a backup? Is there a way of doing this?

Ray Boote

Answer

Joining two computers together for file transfer and printer sharing is fairly straightforward, but it involves the purchase and installation of a couple of network cards.

A good starting point would be to find out if suitable slots are available on both motherboards - I'd recommend PCI slots. They are white. IDE slots are black and AGP muddy brown.

So, assuming a white slot is available in each PC, purchase a couple of identical PCI network cards. They do not HAVE to be identical, but experience shows that odd cards may have difficulty communicating with each other. It's not supposed to be like that, but sometimes it is.

An RJ45 (CAT 5 UTP) cable is also required, although I cannot remember whether it should be a 'straight-through' cable or a 'cross-over' cable. Advice could be sought when purchasing the network cards.

Fit the cards and fire up the PCs. Plug and Play should detect the cards and ask for the driver disk (which will come with each card).

Having rebooted after the install, right click on the Network Neighbourhood icon on the desktop and left click Properties.

On the Configuration tab, if you have a modem installed, you will see two TCP/IP lines and one NetBEUI line (plus other which do not concern us). Highlight the TCP/IP for the network adapter and click Properties. Blob the 'Specify an IP address'. In the IP Address box type 192.168.0.1 (the dots are already there). In the Subnet Mask type 255.255.255.0 Click OK

On the Identification tab, enter a short name for the PC and a



Crash Reports? No, Thanks

Of course, with Microsoft at the helm, nothing as cool as Task Manager's handling of a crash can be left alone. Microsoft insists on meddling by sending itself the details of the crash. No doubt, the crash report does provide clues, often vital ones that you can review, to explain why the program crashes. But once I've looked at a report — say, Eudora's `paige32.dll` bug that Qalcomm won't fix — I'm no longer interested in seeing it pop up. So I've turned parts of the feature off. (From Start, Control Panel, Advanced tab, Error Reporting.) This dialog gives me choices, and they're good ones. I can get the report but not send it, opt to hear only about programs or XP's errors, or even add specific programs to watch.

Zap, You're Restored

GoBack was the first successful utility to save snapshots of a PC's hard drive and let you restore the drive to a time when things were running well. It shouldn't surprise you to see a similar feature in Windows XP. (Roxio's GoBack, \$40, download at www.roxio.com.)

Quick aside: Many of Microsoft's niftier features are from the brain trusts of third-party companies. Woody, creator of dozens of Office, and specifically Word add-ons, said that to me in a private e-mail recently.

XP's System Restore does just about everything, just not as well. Nonetheless, it's an improvement over the way it worked in Windows ME, and a handy tool. I create a Restore point just before installing a new application. If the installation goes kablooey, I use System Restore to jump five minutes into the past and get my system going again. I use it so often, I pinned it onto my Start Menu for easy access.

Try it: Find System Restore in All Programs, Accessories, System Tools and right mouse click on the icon and choose Pin on Start menu. Easy, no?

System Restore's Problems

The problem? System Restore isn't perfect. While I haven't had a problem in the 25 times I've used it, some reports on the Internet talk about DLLs that should be gone after a System Restore, are still on the system. One thing Microsoft doesn't tell you is that each Restore Point (and system checkpoints, those restore points XP does automatically) takes up disk space. You can dump all but the last system point by using XP's Disk Cleanup tool. Open Disk Cleanup, by clicking Start, choose All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, select Disk Cleanup, and choose the More Options tab. (Shortcut: From Start, Run, type `cleanmgr`.)

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World and runs the Pasadena IBM Users Group.

Things to consider when purchasing a Digital Camera

by Jim Topper



Since we are entering the holiday season with gift giving on our minds, I thought it would be a good idea to write about some of the things to consider when purchasing a digital camera. This is not an all inclusive list. It does contain the features and other considerations I believe should be high on one's list of considerations before making a purchase.

Image size, i.e. number of "megapixels", 2,3, 4, or 5

The higher the number of megapixels, the larger the image file will be. This will allow you to print the images at a higher ppi (pixels per inch) resolution. Generally speaking even a 2 megapixel digital camera should be able to print an 8x10 picture with decent detail. 3, 4 or more megapixel cameras will allow you to print larger images as you wish or give you even more detail at smaller picture sizes, i.e. 4x6, 5x7, or 8x10["].

Zoom lens type and "reach", i.e. 3x, 4x, 10x... you get the idea.

Digital cameras have two types of zoom lenses, digital zoom and optical lens zoom. It is best to buy a digital camera with an optical zoom lens. Almost all digicams have digital zoom in addition.

However a digital zoom degrades the image quality since it interpolates the image information for the zoom effect. It is best NOT to use digital zoom unless you cannot get a picture any other way. For optical zoom, I'd recommend at least a 3x zoom, a higher zoom ratio lens if you can afford it.

Type of storage medium

There are 3 types of storage medium currently that are widely used in digital cameras. These are: Compact Flash cards, Smart Media cards, and Memory Stick cards. All types can be had in sizes up to 128 MB, with Compact Flash cards available at much larger sizes. My picks for storage media would be either Compact Flash cards or Memory Stick cards which are used in most current Sony digicams. The Smart Media cards are somewhat thinner and more flexible and are more prone to damage during handling if one is not careful. Also look for a digital camera that has a USB interface for downloading pictures from the camera. Some cheaper or older models still use serial port connections and they are very slow downloading images compared to USB. Finally most digital cameras ship with rather small memory cards included. You will want to purchase additional card(s) of at least 64 meg size, as your finances allow, for extended periods of picture-taking.

continued on page 9

Type of batteries it uses

Digital cameras can use several types of batteries for power. Some models use proprietary batteries, which tend to be expensive. Other digital cameras will use AA size batteries. Be warned, the only type of AA batteries to use in a digital camera are NiMH (nickel metal hydride) batteries, which are rechargeable. Other types will not last in a digicam, such as alkaline batteries. Sony in particular uses its own batteries which are expensive but have a great feature included, circuitry that will tell you how much time is left in battery power before it needs to be recharged. In any case, you will want at least 2 batteries or 2 sets if using AA type batteries. Most digicams will ship with only one, so you will want to purchase a second one, or set.



Optical viewfinder or LCD only

Some digital cameras have both types, others only use a LCD screen located on the back of the camera body. For bright sunlight picture-taking you will want to consider buying a digicam with both types, since almost all LCD screens are unusable in direct sunlight. However you can purchase a separate LCD shade which would help if the digicam you get only has a LCD screen.

Size of the camera and how it feels in your hands and weight

Two of the more important considerations are the above. You will want to buy a digicam that feels good in your hands and has controls that are easy to reach and use. Weight is important too since you may be carrying the camera around for several hours at a time. Most newer digital cameras weigh less than 1 pound and have a neck strap for carrying when not using the camera. I'd be leery of a digicam that only has a wrist strap, since wrist straps make carrying the camera more difficult over a longer period of time.

Filters

Some digital cameras have screw threads on the lens body for adding filters. If the digital camera you purchase has this feature, be sure to buy a "skylight" or "UV" filter for the camera. This will protect the lens from dirt, finger prints and scratches. It is much easier to clean or replace a lens filter than the camera's lens!

Flash

Almost all digital cameras have a built-in flash. A nice feature to look for is one that has a "red eye" reduction feature. A few of the higher end digicams also have provisions for adding an external flash on a "hot shoe" bracket, or have a jack to plug in an external flash unit. For general picture-taking, the internal flash will be OK. However you should know that almost all internal flash units have a range of +/- 10 feet. Digital cameras that can add an external flash unit will double or even triple that distance for a high power flash unit.

*Jim Topper is the Newsletter Editor for Another Baltimore Computer Users Group
Our thanks to The Kwartha Computer Club for this info*