



Reports

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Association of Personal Computer User Groups

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ADDENDUM

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Q3 Reports never made the presses, so to speak. Several articles, meant for the Q3 issue, didn't make it into the Q4 issue, either.

Besides inside this Addendum, they can be found at: www.apcug.net/ APCUG Tab/Reports.

The new Volunteer Of The Year Award Logo is included here as, it is hard to see the details in it on the front page of Q4. It is a Jim Evans Design.



ILINC VIRTUAL CONFERENCE USING LINUX

Robert Lee Vance (Bob)

Region 3 Advisor (OH, PA, WV)

Jim Evans, APCUG Director, and I recently did a proof of concept test using iLinc on a Linux computer using Ubuntu 12.04. To run this application the file has to be opened using the Wine Windows emulation program, after receiving an e-mail message similar to the one below:

Hi Bob,

Here is the login information for your iLinc webinar.

Webinar Details:

Add this webinar to your calendar: <https://apcug.ilinc.com/calendar/vkwwcpk/ckpkmb>

Title: Friday test

Date & Time: 08/04/2012 at 01:00 PM Eastern Time

Duration: 2 hour(s)

Leader: Hewie Poplock

Join this webinar:

Your Personal Join Link: <https://apcug.ilinc.com/join/vkwwcpk/ckpkmb> (do not forward to others).

Want to prepare your system ahead of time? <https://apcug.ilinc.com/systest/vkwwcpk>

I clicked on the link and downloaded and saved the executable file.

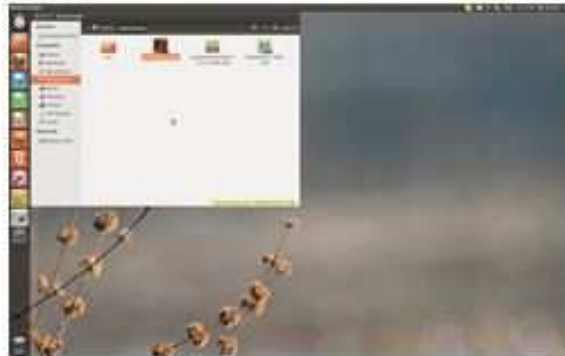
The file was saved in the home folder:



Click to open the folder:



Find the iLinc Join executable file:



Right click on the iLinc Join file: Choose Open with Wine:



You should now be able to attend all of the virtual conferences, presentations and meetings using the latest APCUG meeting application. One of the greatest proofs of concept is that iLinc has the functionality to work well with all the major operating system platforms: Windows, Mac and Linux.

Be sure to test your audio:



IDEAS FOR YOUR USER GROUP

Gabe Goldberg

APCUG Adviser Region2

Twice-yearly PC Clinics Add Value to Membership

For many years, WACUG (Washington Area Computer User Group, www.wacug.org, soon to be PATACS, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society, www.patacs.org, see Region 2 news) has offered June/December PC clinics for major and minor tweaks, tune-ups, and assorted fixes. While the main monthly meeting is held, regular volunteers provide aid and comfort to ailing computers -- and their owners. Good maintenance/repair practices and non-exotic hardware/software toolkits deal with nearly every malady presented. These clinics are a great way for user groups to increase membership value, recruit and retain members, and serve the community.

Does Your Group Use Social Networking?

Whether or not your group uses Meetup, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Ning, or some new social networking service invented since this article was written, don't neglect a familiar, tried and true, facility: discussion mailing lists. Simple to set up -- just a few clicks on Yahoo or Google websites -- these let members (and others, if desired) converse, share tips, ask and answer questions, and stay in touch between meetings. Lists also allow people who don't attend meetings to participate in group activities and feel connected to the membership.

They link members, help "break the ice" for new members, and elicit group spirit/activity. Some groups gave one list for discussion and announcements while others use separate lists; groups may have topical lists (photography, genealogy, Windows, hardware, beginners, etc.) and some provide a list or two for each SIG (special interest group). There's no one right way to use lists so it's easy to experiment.

Lists are easy to operate and maintain, since they're self-service: people subscribe, unsubscribe, and update information without a list owner's intervention. But there are two suggestions for success:

- 1) Establish ground rules for use. That is, how strictly must posts follow list mission and whether off-topic posts are allowed. List culture will mostly be determined by subscriber preferences, but too many off-topic messages can annoy people who expect to be reading only about specified topics.

- 2) Don't call mailing lists listservs (no matter how it's spelled or capitalized). LISTSERV (r) is a registered trademark of L-Soft International, developers of the first mailing list manager. Only their product is LISTSERV but mailing lists aren't.

General and SIG Meeting Reports Elicit Member and Community Interest

I hate missing user group meetings where topics interest me. Not nearly as satisfying as attending -- but still interesting and worthwhile -- is reading reports and summaries of what happened, who spoke, what was said, and any resources or websites highlighted. Think of meeting reports as matching bookends to meeting announcements, keeping members informed and involved in group activities and (of course) motivating them to attend future meetings. Describing presentations and audience Q&A sessions increases member feedback, meeting turnout, and even volunteers, as people learn about what's being done and want to participate.

Keeping Your Group Reachable at Low Cost

It's important for members and others being able to reach group volunteers and the "official" group. But maintaining a dedicated phone line and maybe a FAX line is expensive and inflexible, a burden when people's duties change.

Two simple and free technologies make this easier. Google Voice provides a free phone number which forwards calls simultaneously to one or more real telephones, and can be reconfigured as needed. And eFax provides a free telephone number for receiving FAXs; transmissions are delivered as email attachments to a designated email address which can similarly be changed easily.

Along those lines, I always appreciate groups providing contact information for reaching specific people, rather than a single generic info@usergroup.org address. A good example of this is www.bcug.com/contact.html which -- as a bonus -- provides pictures of officers and trustees, making it easier to find them in a crowd.

Where ARE you?

As APCUG's Region 2 Advisor, I see many group magazines and newsletters from around the country (thanks, Hawaii!), not just from states I deal with (NJ/DE/MD/DC/VA). In my travels, whether officially for APCUG or not, I like to visit user groups -- the endless variety is always interesting, I like meeting user group members and leaders, and I always bring away technology tips and ideas for meetings and group leadership. But I'm sometimes frustrated by websites and newsletters which don't give complete addresses for events, perhaps just noting street address, or even just naming the landmark where things occur. Not giving full location information is shortsighted since it may keep away people who'd attend and join. I especially appreciate maps and directions, showing that the welcome mat is out!

Expect the Unexpected

Has your group ever suffered a less-than-successful meeting when a speaker didn't arrive (I lost one to a dead car battery!). Has the group had a setback when a long-time volunteer dropped out? Has a regular meeting site suddenly become unavailable?

These routine hazards are faced by any volunteer organization -- but a little planning keeps them from being catastrophes. So it's worth having as comprehensive contingency/backup plans as possible for dealing with issues of meeting sites, succession (officers, directors, volunteers, SIG leaders), missing speakers, Internet or projector glitch, etc. If it CAN go wrong, it HAS gone wrong -- for some group somewhere. I've been most impressed by groups and volunteers exhibiting "grace under pressure" and being able to overcome obstacles and make people glad they've attended.

Speaking of Catastrophes...

Here's an entertaining -- and eye-opening -- article about running smooth-sailing meetings:

How to Give a Catastrophe-Free Presentation -- <http://tinyurl.com/765xs4s>
or <http://h30565.www3.hp.com/t5/Feature-Articles/How-to-Give-a-Catastrophe-Free-Presentation/ba-p/2594>

Giving Recognition Where It's Due

Fairfax County, where I live, runs a wonderful yearly event to select and recognize the County's Citizen of the Year and other noteworthy contributors to the community.

Each year, a selection committee of county-wide organizations reviews nominations; winners are honored at an annual banquet.

The Citizen of the Year Award, Citations of Merit and Special Gratitude Awards recognize and honor citizens whose contributions of time and talent resulted in major accomplishments that have enhanced the quality of life for citizens of Fairfax County.

I've occasionally nominated user group colleagues for such awards; they've greatly appreciated being singled out for contributions and have enjoyed participating in the County-wide recognition event. Many areas have similar recognition programs for community-group volunteers so this is a great way to show appreciation for often-unsung heroes, plus get visibility for your group.

On a smaller -- but still significant -- scale, it's easy and valuable to occasionally designate people as "Volunteer of the Month/Year/Decade/Whatever" and highlight to the membership how they've contributed. Back in the day when CPCUG drew 400 people to meetings, the group's Director of Volunteers (a wonderful position to create!) would call the Volunteer of the Month to the stage (we met in a huge National Institute of Health [NIH] auditorium) and award a special Capital PCUG (CPCUG) cap, with great applause. My local genealogy group pursues this idea with its Sustained Service Award, sure to gratify recipients and motivate other volunteers.

Taxes

I recently had a long series of exchanges with a user group about their tax situation: the group has existed for many years, is not 501(c)(3), has relatively low annual income (under \$5000), and has never filed tax paperwork. While it's inconclusive whether they actually need to file (and some advice is to leave well enough alone, not start filing now), it's clear that being officially non-profit -- that is, having IRS 501(c)(3) certification -- makes life easier. Donations are tax deductible and at that level of funding, the barest minimum paperwork -- a postcard tax return -- suffices.

Speaking of Nonprofits...

Congressman Jim Moran (8th District, Virginia) held his annual Nonprofits Grants Workshop July 9 in Arlington, VA. Visit his website for more information:

<http://moran.house.gov/event/nonprofit-grants-workshop>

These events are valuable and thought provoking, offering tips, tools, resources, and introductions for fundraising in ways not traditional for user groups. If you're not near this event, check with your congressman or local officials for similar resources serving your community. And if they're not on board with this, use Moran's event to motivate them to do so.

Another great resource is The Foundation Center -- <http://www.foundationcenter.org/> -- which describes itself as the world's leading source of information on philanthropy, fundraising, and grant programs. It offers diverse free classes in multiple cities and online.

"Dunbar's number"

I came across this interesting tidbit:

https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/Dunbar%27s_number

Dunbar's number is a theoretical cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships. These are relationships in which an individual knows who each person is, and how each person relates to every other person.

Proponents assert that numbers larger than this generally require more restrictive rules, laws, and enforced norms to maintain a stable, cohesive group. No precise value has been proposed for Dunbar's number. It has been proposed to lie between 100 and 230, with a commonly used value of 150. Dunbar's number states the number of people one knows and keeps social contact with, and it does not include the number of people known personally with a ceased social relationship, which such a number might be much more numerous and likely depends on memory size.

...and it somehow seems relevant to user groups, SIGs, etc. Some of the best, most active, most social, most stable groups I know have memberships in this range. I'm not suggesting limiting group size, just that there might be related opportunities in organizational structure. ☺

THREE REASONS TO KEEP YOUR COMPUTER USER GROUP GOING

Greg West

APCUG Advisor Region 6 (KY, IL, IN, MI), and
International (Australia, Canada)

Just like any group, computer user groups are no different, they get stale. The executive, or people who run the meetings get burnt out and the members become bored. The meetings are the “same old” and the topics are like welcome mats, they get worn out.

This certainly begs the question, “So what can we do?”

First, before we can tackle that question, let's look at the three reasons for keeping your computer group alive. This concept is taken from the above mentioned article (<http://bit.ly/computergroups>) to show that computer user groups still play a very important role in the community today.

Keeping Current with Technology

There was a time when all you had was a desktop computer with Windows 98 or XP, maybe you still do. However, when we turn on the television, listen to others talking, or go to a library or school we quickly see that technology is changing at an ever-increasing speed. User group discussions and demonstrations help members keep current with what's new in the technology world.

Articles and tips in your newsletter and information on your Website are also ways for members to keep up-to-date.

Ongoing, Practical Training

If there's a better way to do something, you'll hear about it at your meeting and learn how to use it. This is true. I learn something new at every meeting. It may only be some tiny tech tip that someone has shared to enhance my technology experience or it may be how to use a program or app that will help me accomplish a task.

Peer Support and Social Interaction

It has been said, computer user groups provide an excellent opportunity to ask tech-related questions and get answers on the spot. There are no fancy tech words and no expensive tech help bills. The article correctly states: “User groups provide an ideal forum to present such issues and to receive not just answers, but step-by-step approaches for

resolving them. They are a forum for expanding technical skills and for the practical application of that knowledge.”

At a computer group meeting you watch someone demonstrating a software program. You ask a question. You get an answer. It doesn't get much better than that.

As society ages, unfortunately certain disabilities crop up whether we like it or not. The article is quick to also point out that *“Whether it’s shopping on the web, talking via Skype, balancing your checkbook online, or getting around using an iPhone GPS app, people use technology to connect with one another and to live a full life.”* The article goes on to say that *“the skills gleaned in a user group can help one better manage a disability by mitigating its isolating effects and inspiring the confidence to expand their world.”*

Over the years I have belonged to six different user groups, both Mac and Windows based, and currently belong to two computer groups. Each group was unique unto their own, albeit, having certain similarities. All the groups kept current with technology, they offer ongoing help and training, and they supply tons of peer/tech support. But I must say what really keeps me coming back to my user groups is the fun of sharing new tech information and the social interaction with other tech enthusiasts at all skill levels.

Check out the new changes at APCUG today:

Website: <http://apcug.net>

Twitter: APCUG

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/apcug> ☺

“TIDBITS FOUND IN THEIR AWARD WINNING NEWSLETTER”

Big Bear Computer Club, CA, Region 10

www.bigbearcc.org

The computer club has a new contest – Find the Bear (their logo).

Enter the "Find the Bear" contest to win a cool prize.

1. Locate the "BEAR"
2. Click on it
3. Fill in the form
4. Send it



You must attend the following meeting to receive the prize.

The first one was located in the InformIt, Pearson/Que ad; the winner won a USB hub.

- Have you done something to help your computer group?
 - Have you brought a guest presentations?
 - Have you volunteered to do a we all learn just one new
 - Make it a point to offer someone who knows something that another doesn't.
 - Have you offered program suggestions?
- with you to participate in the club activities and short “how-to” presentation? It isn't that hard. If thing, the meeting is worthwhile.
- thing you know to a member. You may be the



- Is there is something you would like to learn about? Your input is welcomed! Use the Survey form and submit it at a meeting or by email.
- Do you want to be a “mentor”? Find someone in the club who would like / needs a mentor.

Bearly Bytes Newsletter Holds a Wealth of Information



Didn't get around to reading your emailed newsletter? Mistakenly deleted it, or just forgot? Looking for instructions, presenters, and subjects that were discussed at the monthly meetings and previously published in

Bearly Bytes? Go to bigbearcc.org and click on Newsletters. These are the Bearly Bytes archived monthly newsletters and aren't going away. So, you have another chance!

The best and easiest way to locate information is to review the Table of Contents on the first page. Most, if not all of the article titles are listed there. Go to the page to review the article for the information you are looking for.

Even if you are not going “back in time” for your information, there is an archived wealth of interesting and informative articles. Don't forget to refer friends, neighbors, and those you are mentoring—to a good and a ready source of help and information

Submitted by Eileen Bryan

At the August meeting, they tried something a little different. Vice President, Yomar Cleary, located a Web site that is full of short training videos. They cover various aspects of computer use. Some are regarding computer basics, others are about Microsoft Office programs. There are more that talk about specific Internet sites and how to use them. Because the videos are brief, they offer small bites of information at a time. Their plan was to break into a few small groups and



watch a number of these videos during the meeting. It was a success! Each group moved from one table to another. At each station, a facilitator played a short training video on a particular subject. The four areas covered were Computers 101, Google, Microsoft Word and Microsoft Publisher. At their next meeting they are going to revisit the videos for the whole group and have a Q&A session for each video. You might want to check out:

www.teachanolddognewtricks.com/.

A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE
APCUG REGION 1 MEMBERSHIP & SPEAKER DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM

Sam Wexler

APCUG Advisor

President, Valencia Falls Computer & Technology Club

August 22, 2007

swexler@apcug.org

NOTE: This is a bit of reminiscence about APCUG events of the past, and from people who were actually there. This last August 18, 2012, Region 1 held their Management and Leadership Development Conference (MLDC) Brainstorming Virtual Conference. Five years ago, in August 2007, at a time when I thought Club Med was a place in France, Hank Feinberg and I, with the help of many others, ran the first Region 1 MLDC conference. There were no virtual conferences in those days and we held it in a Wappingers Falls, NY restaurant. I had met Hank less than 6 weeks earlier and the whole conference (which we called a Symposium) was put together in that short amount of time. I took videos, burned them onto seventy DVDs and mailed them to all attendees, Region 1 User Groups plus the APCUG Board of Directors and Board of Advisors. The following article was placed in the October, 2007 Reports.

The APCUG Region 1 Membership & Speaker Development Symposium was held on Wednesday, August 22, 2007 at the Hometown Buffet in Wappingers Falls, just south of Poughkeepsie, NY.

The idea for this meeting actually started during the first weekend in June when the APCUG Directors and Advisors met in Tulsa and agreed on a North East meeting in 2008. When Dick Kranz (Mid-Hudson Computer User Group), Hank Feinberg (Rockland PC User Group), Jack Marsella (Inter-Group Liaison) and Sam Wexler (APCUG Region 1 Advisor) met for the first time in mid-July, everyone agreed we needed to learn from a summer 2007 meeting before we could do a bigger meeting the following year. Right from the beginning it was decided that we run the Symposium like a business. A few meetings and a lot of emails later the Symposium was ready to start. The Hometown Buffet was chosen because their meeting room had the best price (free) in return for our attendees having dinner there. The date was only a little more difficult. We all knew no date was good for everyone so we picked a date that was best for most. The meeting had to be before Labor Day, the summer weekends were quickly ruled out and August 22 was available at the restaurant so that was our date. The agenda was put together, volunteers were easy to find to present or run each segment and the announcement was sent out to the Region 1 User Groups. There were only two changes to the original agenda. Jay Ferron was elected the new APCUG President in late July and added to do the Vision presentation. We discovered DACS had done a Focus Group on our main topic and everyone wanted to hear their results. The door prizes segment that was run by Jack Marsella went from where do we get them to a flood of items by the day of the meeting. We had hoped for 20 attendees from the 5 biggest User Groups; we actually got 27 attendees from the 6 biggest User Groups. The bottom line: the Symposium itself may have been a big deal but the actual putting it together and running it was definitely no big deal. We urge all other Regions to give it a shot!

The official starting time was 4:00 PM but it was announced the week before the meeting that attendees could come earlier and many came as early as 2:30 PM to set up. From 2:30PM to 5:20 PM which was called "Primary Meal & Fellowship Time" on the agenda just about everything was discussed in what became a networking segment.

Sam Wexler rang the opening bell at 5:20 PM announcing Jay Ferron, the new APCUG President who officially welcomed the attendees and talked about his Vision for the future. Jay said he had been on the APCUG Board for approximately a year when he was elected President. Three months earlier a number of APCUG people did some soul-searching on how User Groups are serviced and concluded they were not doing a good job. Jay said we should do better and he was told to do it. He looked at what was being done and how they were doing it before realizing the need to change how to do the business.

Jay's philosophy is to run APCUG like a business; either do it well or not do it at all. Since becoming President, APCUG is starting to do some things in a very different way. His very simple question is what we can do to make the lives of the attendees better; like how can we get more people to our annual conference or to your User Group meetings. Jay said the website needs a major updating because for a technology organization, the website should show who you are. Since APCUG is the definitive technology User Group in the world, it should be represented like that.

The Content Data Base (CDB) has all the pertinent information about all APCUG members and should be current. Every group has access to the CDB so when an Advisor sends an email on what is happening, there should be no bounces. He talked about the new web server and services. Within six months, every User Group should be able to post meeting nights. Why? So any vendor can see who else is available when he is in the area so this vendor can contact all the User Groups for a tour. Jay asked how many have gotten free software from vendors to review but took the \$500 product and never wrote again. Every chair should have a co-chair so if someone gets tired or sick then someone can take over and there is always someone around. There will be a big effort to get Regionals off the ground next year like the May 17, 2008 meeting under discussion at the Symposium. The plan is to put Presentations in a Box (PIAB) and a speaker's bureau on the website making it easier to find a speaker or give a presentation if there is none.

Jay requested you either let your Advisor or he know if you have a complaint or issue because if no one knows the issue exists then it can't be fixed. They are working on job descriptions for volunteers because it is easier to get a volunteer if it is known what is wanted. Your volunteers should be recognized and spotlighted in your newsletter. He closed by asking everyone to come to the APCUG National Conference in Las Vegas next January. A Q&A session followed.

During the next session run by Earl Gundersen (Westchester PC User Group), every attendee introduced and talked about himself to the other attendees.

Successful membership and speaker development experience was the subject of Sam Wexler's keynote presentation. Sam is President of the Valencia Falls Computer Club in Delray Beach, Florida and Secretary as well as on the Board of the Florida Association of Computer User Groups (FACUG). He is a snowbird and was elected APCUG Region 1 Advisor last March. The object of his presentation was to not only give the answers to specific questions but also show the processes to get more answers to other questions.

Not everything works for everyone so if you learn just one thing you are ahead of the game; two or more puts you in bonus territory. While Sam has been involved with computers for almost a half century, he has been a businessman/entrepreneur for more than 25 years and is very passionate about saying APCUG and your User Group should both be run like a business. There are very few major breakthroughs out there and these days most innovations are just slight variations of what already exists. For example, the inventors of the Swiffer broom that many attendees own were on television recently and they showed how they took the shortcomings of a broom to invent their new product. Likewise just a few relatively minor tweaks could result in major positive improvements to your User Group. While most groups are losing members, there are some that are actually gaining and he talked about three such groups. He suggested the attendees tried what he called the “screwdriver engineering” approach where you take a chance and try something new that has only minor hits if you do not succeed but major gains if you do. Jay Ferron added even if it didn’t work the first time, you should try it again in six or twelve months. Sam looked at this Symposium to show what a few people could do in little time and at no cost. When we started no one knew if it would happen but if it didn’t the loss would be very minimal. However they took the chance and everyone sees what happened.

Most groups talk about the exciting new technology but call themselves a computer User Group. Many people consider the computer old school resulting in a “been there/done that” feeling which is a turnoff. Some groups should change their name but others should not. Special Interest Groups (SIGs) give a one-on-one with the technology resulting in a good touch and feel of the product. Sam believes you should know the experience of your customers (i.e. novice, intermediate and expert members) and cater to the majority. If your group is 10% experts and you cater to experts then you will lose most of the 90% majority. Allow email problems from members as well as non-members. Sam’s rule of thumb is if he can answer the question in five minutes then he will do it. If it happens to be an area where he has an interest then he could spend more time on it. Rethink if you really want to read the minutes and the financials at your meetings. Most people do not come to the meeting to hear that. Look at your subject matter as a Quality of Life issue. For example, you are not talking about processing or savings pictures; you are talking about receiving, processing and saving pictures of your kids or grandkids. Many members come to meetings to solve all their problems in one hour. If you show them the benefit of learning just one thing then they would appreciate if they actually learned more than one. Make every negative event into a positive experience. For example have all attendees at a meeting scream out “I told you so” so when someone does not back up their hard drive and loses valuable information, you can say the club said “I told you so” and not you. Do surveys; if you do not know what your customers (members) wants then how can you give it to them?

Every year Sam’s Club does several new things; each year they would lose several new members after one year so this year they held a free mini-brunch for new members and only lost one. Everyone likes to get something for nothing. They had one speaker who showed how to get free merchandise via the internet and the next week an entrepreneur who owned several companies with ten million subscribers gave an inside look. His Club gave away in a free raffle a \$950 laptop and everyone loved it. A Google presentation was coupled with a contest to predict the price of Google stock on the day of the presentation and the prizes were a percentage of Google stock.

The next speaker was Dick Kranz (Mid-Hudson Computer User Group) who ran a membership development brainstorming round table discussion on ways to build membership. The resulting ideas follow. Some may be better than others and more work needs to be done but a bad idea as stated could be a good idea if tweaked by someone else.

Please let Sam know if you used any of these ideas and what happened:

- Ask one person
- Bring 3 new members, get one year free
- Advertise, to all ages
- Newspapers, weekly calendar, article
- Put meetings on Google, video tape - more exposure, more members
- Distribute bookmarks to local library
- Local TV show, make appearance/education channel
- Gift wrap for malls as exposure
- Local markets, Stop& Shop, new members
- Change meeting location
- Define your group so people know how they can get involved
- Computer shows/fairs, have a table
- Review sign-in sheets from your meetings
- Local paper needs expertise for computer questions, be available
- Local fairs/shows provide speakers
- Speak English, not Three Letter Acronyms (TLAs) like SIG, PDA
- PC renew, a mall table, reach community
- Free PC tech support
- Local library offer programs. Virus, ID theft, etc.
- Brochure in computer shop, teach new PC buyer
- Bulletin boards
- In Library, school, college use classes as an intro, next step a User Group
- In Library, school, college present problems to a class as an intro, next step a User Group
- Gaming SIG or event to attract younger members
- PTA for improved computer understanding for parents
- Cable TV for local access, self produced. \$40K cameras
- Business cards to your User Group for quick encounters with strangers. Write your number on the back for a familiar contact.
- Review X-members, drop-outs from attendance, old timers for a call by Board members
- Give a gift of membership
- Give away by mom/pop computer shops a free 3-month membership to local group

At the next session, Rob Limbaugh and Sean Henderson gave some of the results of the Danbury Area Computer Society (DACS) Focus Group session that was held last March 3, 2007 at the DACS Resource Center. It was conducted by a professional focus group moderator. Participants were made up of past, present and potential members. DACS volunteers fulfilled recruiter and host duties.

Their membership culture was discussed first. The group is attractive to “non-joiners”, experienced members were less inclined to lead, attendees expected traditional presentation conduct and are generally not interested in social events.

The basic expectations were for an online community that was "always on". They make joining and staying easy by using online payment and auto-renew. SIG and event info are made easy to find.

There were several unexpected results. Organization name affected territorial perceptions. People valued 'networking' over 'socializing'. The term 'computer' doesn't convey other technologies of interest. People were looking for 'Professional', 'Networking', and 'Technology' fulfillment from the group.

Member requests were guides/handouts for General Meeting, attend to the needs of novices and new SIGs/Seminars about peripheral technologies.

There were some criticisms. Their members would rather have fewer meetings with higher-draw speakers. They wanted them to change the 'yard sale' look. Newsletters should feature articles, not primarily promote upcoming meeting. They thought the promotional material were too verbose.

They were asked for their perception if dues were raised to \$100/yr. They would want a mini-monster.com environment, tech career fair and professional events, it would be worth putting on their resume and would want hands-on learning/skill-building.

There were five line items in the summary of what their members wanted. They were; a need for on-line membership processing, their organization's name should be de-regionalized, add a beginner SIG, promote professional networking/events and streamline the online experience.

Hank Feinberg (Rockland PC User Group) next did a short PowerPoint presentation on how to build your own presentation in 60 minutes. First you open up a new word document and list 3-5 possible topics of interest to your User Group. Then you copy and paste the information that interests you about these topics under each heading including graphics. You should cut and paste as you gather content for each topic and create a rough draft with full content. Check magazines, interesting sites and search engines like Google for material related to your topics. Decide which you want to use then edit and expand. Send this all to Microsoft PowerPoint. Edit, add background, timing, special affects and change slide positions. Your 60 minutes is up and you have your very own presentation.

During the Symposium recap run by Dick Kranz and Sam Wexler, the date for the next meeting was decided to be Saturday, May 17, 2008. Several places were suggested and the Palisades Mall in West Nyack, NY was chosen. All APCUG Regions are invited including the Florida snowbirds that happen to be in the area at that time. Please hold the date and more information will be coming out. A list of volunteers was put together for this meeting and contact Sam Wexler if you wish to add your name to this list.

At this point Jack Marsella (Inter-Group Liaison) opened the virtual vault for the massive number of door prizes and everyone went home happy. Later that evening, an on-line survey was sent to all the attendees and the results were excellent. A video DVD of the Symposium highlights was sent to all Region 1 User Groups that requested it so ask your APCUG Rep if you wish to see it. ☺

DISCOUNTS & SPECIAL OFFERS FOR USER GROUPS

There are several user group programs that will give your members discounts on various products – a benefit of their membership in your group. Many of the book programs also have review programs and more. All of the companies have logos or banners they would like displayed on your group's website with a link to their website.

Judy Taylour, Chair, Benefits Committee

TRAINING PROGRAMS

Webucator's Microsoft Office UG Program



UG Contact: Bob Clary - bclary@webucator.com

Enroll in the program: <http://bit.ly/dDegsI>

Webucator offers training certificates for your members.

Lynda.com



Enroll in the program:

<http://www.lynda.com/home/usergroup.aspx>

Dear User Group Manager,

Thank you for your interest in partnering with lynda.com. Word of mouth is the reason lynda.com has become what it is today and our user groups are part of that success! In order to get you registered with our user group program we need some information from you. Please take some time to respond to the questions on the fillable form. These questions will help us customize your user group kit.

BOOK PROGRAMS

Apress User Group Program – 50% discount on all eBooks



UG Contact: usergroup@apress.com

Enroll in the program:

<https://www.apress.com/index.php/gcalendar>

- Free review copies
- Free Apress books & giveaways for User Group raffles and events
- Access to Apress authors for speaking engagements
- Add your meeting to our calendar

Focal Press User Group Program – 40% Discount



UG contact: Sloane Stinson, sloane.stinson@taylorandfrancis.com

Enroll in the program: <http://bit.ly/nv5FDY>

Focal Press has a dynamic partnership program that connects FP with the best and the brightest user groups, Meetup groups, and Professional associations across the world.

What are the benefits?

- two free books of your choice each month to be used as giveaways at meetings
- 40% discount plus free shipping code for user group managers to pass on to their members
- review books as requested (new program – order up to 3 books at a time – reviews due within 90 days)
- request an author as a guest speaker at user group meetings chapter samples that can be shared with members

What is the exchange?

- mention FP benefits at user group meetings
- logo or banner on user group website post book reviews on amazon.com

When you register, you agree to receive monthly correspondences from Focal Press which includes member benefit updates, new content that can be shared with members, as well as new product announcements.

Focal Press defines a user group as an organization (5+ users) that connects with one another either face-to-face or virtually for a creative purpose. They require that there be one point of contact between the user group and Focal Press.

NoStarch User Group Program – 30%

US Contact: Jessica Miller - usergroups@nostarch.com

Additional discount on order of 10+ books.

**O'Reilly User Group Program – 35% Discount**

UG Contact: Marsee Henon, usergroups@oreilly.com

Enroll in the program: <http://ug.oreilly.com/>



- Review copies of O'Reilly products
- Donation of books and other promo items – request a couple of books on the topic of your meeting
- Discounts on O'Reilly conferences
- Monthly newsletter
- O'Reilly speakers
- Webcasts for your meetings

Peachpit Press User Group Program – 35% Discount

UG Contact: Keely Hild, usergroups@peachpit.com

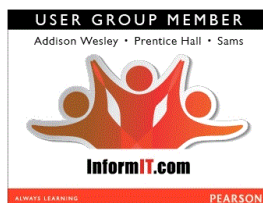
Enroll in the program: http://www.peachpit.com/user_groups/



Peachpit represents an elite collection of the world's leading computer book imprints specializing in graphics and design, including their flagship, Peachpit Press, as well as New Riders, Adobe Press, Apple Certified, among others.

Why "partner" you ask? They figure this is a give and take proposition—by registering your group, you'll receive information on their new and exciting releases, discounts on their titles, information on special events they are attending, and more. And in return, they ask that from time to time you share your thoughts on what they're publishing, what technologies you're using, or maybe how your group membership is changing and growing. By registering, you agree to receive an e-mail newsletter each month detailing user group news, benefits information, and other announcements. They also request that you show your support for their program by posting one of their Peachpit User Group Member banners to your group's Web site.

Pearson / Que / Informit / Sams Program – 35% Discount



Enroll in the program: <http://bit.ly/2dK4L>

Their program represents well-known Pearson technology brands such as Addison-Wesley Professional, Cisco Press, Exam Cram, IBM Press, Prentice Hall Professional, Que Publishing, and Sams Publishing.

In an effort to assist qualifying technology user groups, Pearson Education imprints support you in educating your group members and building membership attendance. The Pearson Education User Group Program offers great discounts, contests, and a common place to find resources and information about the latest tools and materials available on key technology topics.

What Qualifies a User Group?

User groups are typically volunteer, not-for-profit organizations, or special interest groups. Companies and colleges are not included in the program. While they appreciate outside interest in their program, they respectively request that only leaders of legitimate user groups apply.

To qualify, groups must have:

- Active membership of 10 or more people
- Valid and active website for shared information
- Regular online or face-to-face meetings

They request that group leaders relay product information and materials to all group members and provide attendance levels and/or contact information (members' e-mail addresses) to help raise awareness of available promotional offerings.

WILEY User Group Program – 40% Discount, Wiley technology titles



UG Contact: Jeff Parker, jparker@wiley.com

Enroll in the program: <http://bit.ly/A8pF06>

User Group Leaders — take the first step in joining the Wrox community. Sign up your user group today. We will use the information you provide to inform you of new book announcements, information about our authors, and ways for you to announce upcoming events to the Wrox community.

Door Prizes, review copies, giveaways, and more.

McGraw Hill Review Program

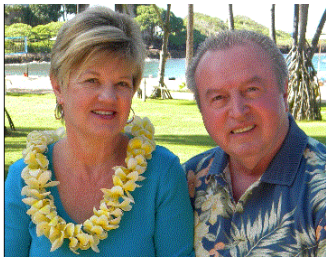
Bettina Faltermeier
Senior Manager, Marketing & Publicity
McGraw-Hill Professional
bettina_faltermeier@mcgraw-hill.com
www.mhprofessional.com
Twitter @MHComputing & @GreenTech



VENDOR DISCOUNT PROGRAMS

User Group Relations – Gene and Linda Barlow

www.ugr.com / gene@ugr.com / linda@ugr.com



UGR offers a ½ price discount on Acronis’ Backup Utility, Acronis True Image Home 2012 and Acronis’ Partitioning Utility, Acronis Disk Director 11 Home. Visit www.ugr.com to purchase the software at a discounted price of \$25/each.

Their special discount prices are available only to user group members and their guests. If you are not a member of a user group, they encourage you to find and attend a user group meeting in your area. They list many user groups in the User Groups section of their web site. You can also check APCUG’s User Group Locator (User Groups / Find a UG near you). ☺