

A Newsletter from the
Gold Country
Computer Learning Center



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Inside this Issue

1	Spring is Sprung
1	Does This Compute?
2	Spring Cleaning for Your Computer
3	Did You Know?
4	Do Computers Have a Gender?
4	Tips & Tricks: CDs
5	Photo Gallery <i>Photos by Students and Volunteers</i>
6	General Information & Upcoming Events

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Bits & Bytes



Spring is Sprung

by Cheryl Marshman, Editor

Spring is upon us and for me that means several things: beautiful weather, colorful flowers, and house cleaning. I love the nice weather and enjoy the flowers that bloom in the spring but I don't much like the spring house cleaning. I know it's something that needs to be done but nevertheless I don't like it.

This year besides the spring house cleaning I really need to do some spring computer cleaning as well. My computer looks pretty dirty and dusty.

My computer keyboard looks like the tray of my toaster...I've finally realized the reason you're not supposed to eat at the computer. Lately I've thought I needed new glasses, the computer monitor was getting blurry, but it's just the layers of dust. My mouse is even growing hair!

My CDs could use a bit of cleaning too. I'm not very disciplined about putting my CDs back into the sleeve when I'm done using them. I guess I could get a storage file for them, but haven't got around to that yet.

I suppose if I'm going to all the trouble of cleaning the outside of my computer, I should clean up the data on the inside also. You know, delete those .tmp files and outdated stuff I don't need anymore. Maybe I'll even organize my computer files a bit better.

I'm always trying to find the best or easiest way to do something so I decided to do some research on computer cleaning before

getting started. Besides, it was a good way to postpone the dreaded task.

In the end, it wasn't as painful as I thought it would be. Take a look at the article, *Spring Cleaning for Your Computer* and hopefully your computer will end up as clean as mine is now, without too much trouble.

I guess now I should start the spring house cleaning. Except with my computer so clean and organized, I want to spend time using it. Besides, I've heard it said that a clean house is a sign of a broken computer and mine works just fine!

A clean house is a sign of a broken computer.



Does This Compute?

See if you can figure out these computer riddles. The answers appear at the bottom of page 6.

What is a computer's first sign of old age?

What does a baby computer call his father?

What is an astronaut's favorite key on a computer keyboard?

What happened when the computer fell on the floor?

Why was there a bug in the computer?



Bust the dust. PC cases can get truly dusty, which is a risk to the long-term well-being of your computer. First, make sure to turn off the PC before doing any cleaning tasks. Then look at the fan on the back of your system: If it's fuzzy, use a can of compressed air (sold at hardware stores for less than \$10) to spray off the dust in a sideways direction. Dust other case surfaces with a disposable dusting cloth, like Swiffer-brand cloths. If there's other gunk on the case (maybe a late-night coffee stain) a slightly damp paper towel will do the trick. Note: While dust lurks inside, too, don't go there unless you're very familiar with the PC's internal organs.

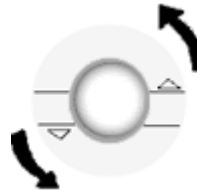
Detail your printer. To prevent printer jams and other foul-ups, give a small burst of compressed air to the printer mechanism that rolls in the paper. With an inkjet printer, make sure to print at least a page once a week in order to avoid cartridge clogs. To clean the outside of the printer case (usually unnecessary, unless the printer lives in a kitchen and has a close encounter with flying food), use a slightly damp cloth. Check out PCWorld.com for more [printer-cleaning tips](#).

Kill keyboard crud. More goodies may lurk in your keyboard than live under your couch. Unplug the keyboard, and then turn it upside down to shake out the cookie crumbs and edible artifacts. A small artist brush works well for dusting between the keys as well as the surface of the keyboard.

Improve your view. When was the last time you dusted your monitor? Unplug it and dust it with a disposable dusting cloth. If it's really dirty--say, with dirty fingerprints or a yogurt-covered handprint--unplug it and use a slightly damp cloth with water only. (Some monitor makers sell cleaning solutions, but you probably don't need one unless you have a fancy or expensive monitor.) Note: Do *not* use Windex-type glass cleaners or detergents and never spray water directly on the display.

Clean your CDs. Dirty CDs can cause read errors and/or cause CDs to not work at all. Cleaning CDs

can be done with a CD cleaning kit however can also be done with a normal clean cotton cloth or shirt. When doing this with a clean cotton cloth or shirt, wipe against the tracks, starting from the middle of the CD and wiping towards the outer side of the CD. Never wipe with the tracks doing so may put more scratches on the CD. It is recommended when cleaning a CD that water be used. However, if the substance on a CD cannot be removed using water, pure alcohol can also be used.



Clean the mouse. A dirty mechanical mouse (mouse with a ball) can cause the mouse to be difficult to move as well as cause strange mouse movement. To clean the rollers of an optical-mechanical mouse, you must first remove the bottom cover of the mouse. To do this, examine the bottom of the mouse to see which direction the mouse cover should be rotated. As in the below illustration, the mouse cover must be moved counter clockwise. Place two fingers on the mouse cover and push the direction of the arrows. Once the cover has rotated about an inch, rotate the mouse into its normal position, covering the bottom of the mouse with one hand and the bottom should fall off including the mouse ball. If this does not occur, attempt to shake the mouse gently. Once the bottom cover and the ball are removed, you should be able to see three rollers located within the mouse. Use a cotton swab, your finger, and/or fingernail and move in a horizontal direction of the rollers. Usually, there will be a small line of hair and or dirt in the middle of the roller, remove this dirt and/or hair as much as possible. Once you have removed as much dirt and hair as possible, place the ball back within the mouse and place the cover back on. If the mouse still appears to be having the same issue, repeat the above process; if after several attempts the mouse is still having the same issues, it's likely that your mouse has other hardware issues and we recommend that it be replaced. Note: Cleaning your mouse pad with a damp cloth can also help improve a computer's mouse movement.

Defrag the hard drive. Your PC hard drive needs help to stay in tip-top shape. The Disk Defragmenter utility in Windows groups all the bits of data that

continued page 3 column 1

Continued from page 2

get strewn across your hard drive. By regularly defragging your hard drive (at least once a month is recommended), you reduce the amount of time required to access files and programs. To run the utility, close all open applications, click *Start, Programs* (or *All Programs*), *Accessories, System Tools, Disk Defragmenter*, and follow the instructions.

Stop file mayhem. If you don't organize your PC files once in a while, your hard drive starts to resemble the junk drawer in your kitchen. First, clean out your temporary files: From My Computer, right click the C: drive. Select *Properties* and *Disk Cleanup*. When the next then click OK. Another window will ask, Are you sure you want to perform these actions?...click yes.

For more in depth information about cleaning the data on your computer refer to:

GCCLC article series by Roger Thornburn, "Cleaning your Computer", online @ theunion.com

1st in series (June 19, 2006)

2nd in series (July 31, 2006)

3rd in series (Aug 14, 2006)

4th in series (Sep 4, 2006)

5th in series (Sep 18, 2006)

Documentation from a seminar taught by Roger Thornburn, *Cleaning the Cr@p from Your Computer*. Can be downloaded free @ the GCCLC website



Ohhhhhh.....I
shouldn't have
eaten that mouse

Did You Know?

The oldest student to take a GCCLC class is 90 years old!

As Henry Ford once said, "Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young".

History of the Personal Computer
from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

At first, computers were big, costly, and available only to universities and big corporations. Before the 1990s, most discoveries in information technology were driven by full time researchers having access to the high priced equipment.

In the 1980s small computers started to become available. A personal computer or PC is generally a microcomputer intended to be used by one person at a time, suitable for general purpose tasks such as word processing, programming, editing or playing a computer game, and is usually used to run purchased or other software not written by the user. Unlike minicomputers, a PC is often owned by the person using it, indicating a low cost of purchase and simplicity of operation. The user of a modern PC may have significant knowledge of the operating environment and application programs, but is not necessarily interested in programming nor even able to write programs for the computer.

The term PC was popularized by Apple Computer and soon after many other companies began offering personal computers. International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) developed the first open standard PC (IBM PC launched in US markets in 1981) which standardized the software development. For the first time in the world history we had PC's that used the similar operating systems that allowed the computers' users to communicate by using the same platform.

Soon after, we saw the birth of what we know as current information technology: PCs in our own homes, using communication devices known as modems, to access information on remote servers.



Do Computers Have a Gender?

Computer gender depends on your point of view. Men think that computers should be referred to as female, just like ships, because:

- *No one but their creator understands their internal logic.*
- *The language in which they communicate among themselves is incomprehensible to everyone else.*
- *The message "Bad command or File Name" is about as informative as "if you don't know why I'm mad at you, I'm certainly not going to tell you!"*
- *Your smallest mistakes are stored in long term memory for later retrieval.*
- *As soon as you make a commitment to one, you spend half your paycheck on accessories for it.*
- *Miss a period and they go wild.*
- *You do the same thing for years, and suddenly it's wrong.*

Women think computers are male because:

- *They have lots of data, but are still clueless.*
- *They are supposed to solve problems, but half the time they ARE the problem.*
- *As soon as you commit to one, you realize that if you had only waited a bit longer, you could have had a better model.*
- *To get their attention, you have to "turn them on".*
- *A big "power-surge" will knock them out for the rest of the night!*
- *It is always necessary to have a backup.*
- *They'll do whatever you say if you push the right buttons.*

Tips & Tricks: CDs

by Doug Worthy

Tips for Ejecting a CD

There are several things which could prevent the ejecting process; one could be bad or failing electrical components.

If the CD Tray won't eject to remove a CD, there are several procedures you can try before calling help.

1. Try clicking the *eject* command, found in My Computer. Just *right click* the CD icon, select properties, then left click *eject*.
2. If that doesn't work, try rebooting the computer. Afterward, the eject button may now work.
3. If the CD still won't eject try to add something to the CD. It may eject automatically after the writing to CD is complete.
4. Lastly, use a straightened paper clip and push it into that very small hole you see in the front of the CD tray.

Calling tech support of the manufacturer should be your last option, but if you do, have the details of your device handy, model number, etc.

Do CDs Last Forever?

CDs you put your valuable digital photos on do not last forever. Over time, the quality of digital photos will deteriorate.

PC World Magazine stated that home burned CDs are not the same quality as CD's bought in stores with programs on them. They do not have the same protective layers and can degrade in as little as 5 years.

It's difficult to distinguish high grade CD's from poor ones since few companies use life span as a selling point.

Storing CDs in a cool dark place may slow the deterioration. Having a date on your CD would establish a good reference for the future.

Some experts claim your burned CDs may last up to 10 years, but not to rely heavily on this. For advice about storage, handling, cleaning, and properly labeling CDs checkout this website:

<http://www.itl.nist.gov/div895/carefordisc/>

Photo Gallery

Photos by GCCLC Students and Volunteers

Submit your photos, along with a brief description, to be published in the next Bits & Bytes
publicity3@gcclc.org



Mount Shasta
Enhanced photo by Ginny Gleason



Red Rock Enhancement Resort
Sedona Arizona
Photo by Doug Worthy



Oregon Coast
Photo by Bob Reeves



Dahlia in Bloom
Photo by Diane Masini

General Information

GCCLC Location:

Gate 2 Nevada County Fairgrounds
Grass Valley, CA 95949

General information:

Call 273-0497

Visit us on the web @ www.gcclc.org



Volunteer Info:

Karen 470-0270

you can also volunteer online @

<http://www.gcclc.org/volunteer.htm>

Course registration:

Carol 273-3029

You can also register online @

<http://www.gcclc.org/classes/register.htm>

Seminar or user group info & signup:

Joan 273-6955

or call the Community Center at 273-4961

To contribute articles, photos, or ideas to the Newsletter

Cheryl 432-2418

or email publicity3@gcclc.org

Gold Country
GCCLC.org
Computer Learning Center

Upcoming Events

Computer Labs

Tuesdays 2:00 – 4:00

Thursdays 11:00 – 1:00

Community Center Lounge

This is an opportunity for Students to come into the Learning Center, use a computer, and have a lab monitor available to answer questions or help work through issues.

Sign-up for Lab time @

<http://gcclc.org/cgi-bin/labcal.pl>

User Group Meetings

3rd Thursday of the Month

9:00 – 11:00

Community Center Lounge

Open to Students and Volunteers

No pre-registration required

The first half of the meeting (45 min) is a short discussion on a selected subject - led by one of our "techies". The second half of the meeting is an opportunity to ask our "panel of experts" any question about your computer or hi-tech problem!

Seminars

4th Wednesday of the Month

Community Center Lounge

Fee is \$10 single/\$15 double

Given by one of our technical staff, our Seminars provide in depth coverage of a single subject and handouts/notes are normally available. Seminars are presentations - rather than a "hands on" class.

Answers to riddles on page 1:

Loss of memory; Data; The space bar; It slipped a disk;

It was looking for a byte to eat