

PPCUG

NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE PRINCETON PC USERS GROUP

Monday July 9, 2001

Broadband Internet Service

Jacki Saunders, Comcast Cable

**Learn about the different broadband offerings such as cable or DSL
and which is right for you!**

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in No Way implies endorsement of its programs

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PC Expo or TECHX 2001, Whatever! Commentary

By: Paul Kurivchack – PPCUG

The annual show known as PC Expo has been turned into an event called TECHX. Well it is mighty smart on CMP's part to eliminate the PC title from the show as fewer and fewer PC vendors' exhibit at this show. In fact I think that this was the smallest and lightest attended shows of all time. I arrived on Tuesday (the first day) at 1:30 pm to find absolutely no crowds waiting to pickup badges and even worst, when I hit the main floor (only one floor this year), I was able to see clearly to the back of the exhibit floor. Not that I like huge crowds since it becomes impossible to see or learn much, but there was no crowd at all. I was able to walk the full floor, speak with a number of vendors, spend a few minutes listening to a couple of presentation and be on my way home at 4:30 pm. No need this year to plan a full day at the show unless you have nothing better to do and wanted that special golf umbrella give a-way that you had to wait in line for forty minutes for a fifteen minute presentation. I did not wait in line nor get the umbrella.



About PPCUG

General Meetings

Second Monday of the month at the Lawrenceville Library.
Route 1 and Darrah Lane.

7:00-7:45 PM: Social Time / Tech Corner

7:45 PM: Meeting Comes to Order

8 PM: Featured Presentation

For information about upcoming meetings or joining PPCUG call 908-218-0778 to leave a message.

Board Meetings

For Meeting Location, Date and Time, call 908-218-0778

Board meetings are open to All.

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Annual Dues Rates

Normal dues rate is \$30 per year.

New Members Only: after February, the rate is \$2.50 per month times the number of months remaining in the year.

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Coming Events

August 13, 2001 - Upgrade Your PC - Continued!

Tom Canavan & Paul Kurivchack will continue upgrading process from May's general meeting.

September 10, 2001 - Geneology

John Konvalinka will speak on geneology.

October 15, 2001 - GIMP GNU Image Manipulation

Jon Abolins will explain what GIMP is and how it is used. (Note: Third Monday)

November 19, 2001 - Palm Pilot, more than a PDA

Cass Lewart will demonstrate there is more to a Palm Device than just the calendar & contacts. (Note: Third Monday)

December 10, 2001 - Elections & Holiday Party



Presidents Message

by Paul Kurivchack

Thanks to the many PPCUG members who turned out for the first joint meeting with the Princeton MAC Users Group. Hopefully everyone will agree that it was an outstanding success. The facilities that PMUG uses are great, despite the lack of air conditioning and Doug Dixon's presentation was very informative and entertaining. Doug's explanation on the different types of streaming media, Apple QuickTime, MS Media and Real Network's RealMedia was excellent. I learned a lot from Doug as to what is out on the market and where streaming media is going over the next couple of years. I hope that through the efforts of Sol Libes (special thanks goes to Sol for putting this meeting together), we will be able to arrange at least one or two joint meeting a year with PMUG on platform generic topics.

As I mentioned in last months Presidents message that we would purchase a new LCD projector, well the deed has been done. I picked up the new projector on June 15th. I was able to test the unit on our laptop and by attaching my VCR. I still can not say enough good things about the Polaroid projector. The output is superb both from the laptop and especially the VCR. Now for future meetings when vendors such as Microsoft ship us videos as part of the MindShare package, we will easily be able to view the videos at our meetings (no popcorn unfortunately).

For our Linux fans, take a look at Jon Abolins meeting minutes from the June meeting. It looks like Jon will be putting the Linux SIG on hold for a couple of months to regroup. Hopefully in the fall, Jon will be able to start up again with a consistent meeting night and location to end the Linux chaos. For all the regular SIG attendees, keep in touch with Jon for future details.

Lastly, as you can all see from the coming events listing above, we have our programming scheduled for the rest of the year. Now comes the task of starting for 2002. If you have topics that would be of interest to the group, please let us know so we can get the ball rolling. I know I am trying to bring back Microsoft for the January or February meeting to discuss WindowsXP but that is only one meeting out of eleven we need. So put your thinking caps on and let us know what you want.

See you all at the July meeting.

Windows Tips: For People in a Hurry (II)

By: Vic Laurie - PPCUG

May's article gave some timesaving tips and this month continues with some more discussion on how to speed up your computer activities.

More on a Faster Boot

(If you are not sure what DOS is or whether your system uses it, you may want to skip this section.)

At boot up, Windows 9X checks for entries in **Config.sys** and **Autoexec.bat**. Many Windows 98 systems do not really need **Config.sys** and **Autoexec.bat** and Windows Me pretty much ignores these files except for environment variables. Things like **Himem.sys** and standard path statements are loaded from the system boot file **io.sys**. Since most people no longer use applications where DOS drivers are required (possibly some games excepted), **Config.sys** and **Autoexec.bat** are basically superfluous. Nonetheless, many computers still come with DOS entries in **Config.sys** and **Autoexec.bat**. In particular, sound cards often still load 16-bit drivers. Unless you specifically need this kind of support, there is no point in wasting time at boot-up and using up memory with unwanted drivers. Use Msconfig (aka System Configuration Utility) to edit **Config.sys** and **Autoexec.bat** by clicking the appropriate tab (Fig. 1). Or those who prefer can use Sysedit (missing in Windows Me and not always installed on Windows 98 systems). Add a "rem" (without quotes) in front of the entry for an unwanted driver. That way you can always get the entry back by removing the "rem". ALWAYS BACK UP before editing. If in doubt about something, leave it alone. See Fred Langa's article at <http://www.techweb.com/winmag/columns/explorer/2000/08.htm> for some more tips.

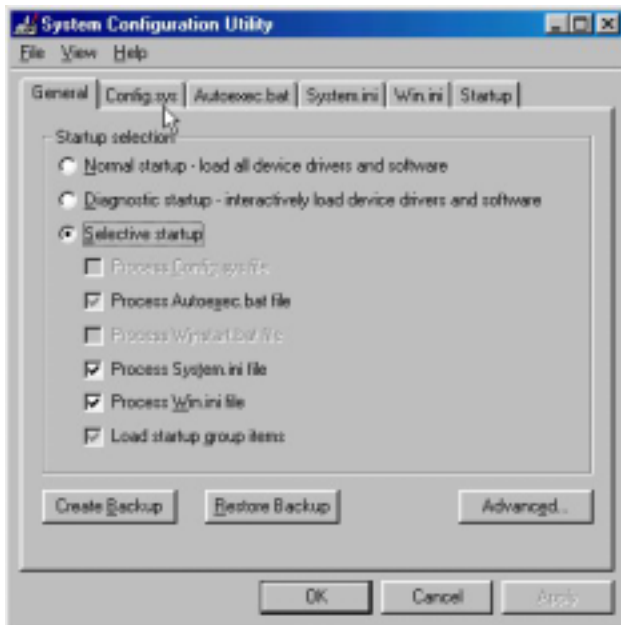


Figure 1. Msconfig (System Configuration Utility)

Program Startup (Continued)

I keep coming back to the program startup issue because it is a major source of problems, not just at boot up but for computer performance in general. This month I want to point to some specific programs that can cause computer slow-downs. Recall from last month that what is loaded at startup can be controlled from the Startup tab in Msconfig (Fig 1). However, after getting this far, many people are not sure which programs to uncheck and which to leave. Many common entries, their functions, and some guidelines for what to uncheck are listed at http://www2.whidbey.net/djdenham/Running_items.htm and <http://www2.whidbey.net/djdenham/Uncheck.htm>. Everybody will have different needs and preferences but my choice as prime candidates for removal are certain entries from Microsoft Office, Real Player, Norton Utilities, Quicken, and AOL. It is not possible to go into all the details of configuring these programs in this limited space but if you have any of them I urge you to check the setup carefully. Try to avoid having any of their components running constantly in the background. Remember that they can always be loaded if you want them. If a program has an icon in the system tray (where the time is displayed) a right-click on the icon may give a menu allowing you to configure the program. It is better to configure startup components from the actual program whenever that option is available. Otherwise, use Msconfig.

I do want to mention Find Fast from Microsoft Office since this is a useless drag on the system for almost any home user and many people have Office installed. The function of Find Fast is to go through the system indexing files at frequent intervals. This action hogs resources, and can cause conflicts with other programs and shutdown problems. The procedure for removing it involves several steps and is described at <http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q158/7/05.asp>. This Microsoft knowledge base article was written for Office 97 but applies to the 2000 version as well. However, you also need to remove Office 2000 from the Startup menu. Use Msconfig and uncheck Office Startup. Office is still there whenever you want it but is no longer running continuously in the background. For a discussion of Office Startup see <http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q210/8/75.ASP>

Open that Window

Sometimes a folder, especially My Documents, seems to take forever to open up. A possible cause of this behavior is too many files in the folder but only if you have thousands of files. (See Microsoft Knowledge Base article <http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q153/1/14.asp>.) This problem can also arise, according to some reports, from having over ~100 sub-folders in My Documents, which can cause all folders to be slow in opening. This happens because of the special nature of My Documents, which is a particular type of system folder. Judging from the many discussions in the Microsoft Newsgroups, the folder My Documents is particularly subject to frequent slow-down prob

Windows Tips continued on page 5

Hard disk upgrades – tribulations, tips, and tools

By: Tom Carman - PPCUG

Let's start with some background. PC motherboards generally have two IDE connectors. Each connector can support two IDE devices, designated "master" or "slave" by jumper settings, for a total of four. IDE devices can be hard disks, CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, CD-RW, or other things such as Zip drives. The motherboard IDE connectors use the ATA/33 specification, also called UDMA/33.

Over the past couple years, hard drives have become available that support the ATA/66 and ATA/100 specifications (with burst data transfer rates 2 and 3 times as fast as ATA/33). IDE connectors on many motherboards continue to use only ATA/33, probably for compatibility with non-hard disk devices. At first, the only way to use ATA/66 or ATA/100 was to connect fast hard disks to a special controller card. Now, many motherboards are built with four, not two, IDE connectors: a pair of ATA/33 units, and a pair of ATA/66 or ATA/100 units. I have such a board, ABIT's BX133-RAID, and this is where the trouble started.

Always read the manual: it can save you a few miss-steps. For instance, the motherboard manual said "HPT 370 IDE controller is designed to support high-speed mass storage. Thus we don't suggest you connect non-disk devices that use ATA/ATAPI interfaces, such as CD-ROM to HPT 370 IDE connector (IDE3 & IDE4)." I did read the manual, but I missed that. So, back when I was building this computer, I attempted to put a DVD-ROM and a Zip disk on those extra IDE controllers; and I found out for myself that this didn't work. On the other hand, some important issues, like attaching a boot drive to those connectors, received only oblique mention in the manual.

If you have ever delved into the CMOS Setup menu of your computer, you probably know that information about your hard disks can be found there. (Entering Setup usually involves pressing the "Delete" or "F1" keys during boot up; this information should display on your screen when the computer starts.) On the BX133-RAID, this only covered devices attached to the IDE1 and IDE2 connectors. Like the continued use of the ATA/33 spec, this is probably for compatibility reasons. Information about drives on the IDE3 and IDE4 connectors was found on the HPT 370 BIOS setting menu, a bit later in the boot up process. This utility is also where you select which, of the drives attached to those connectors, is to be a boot disk. Like the DVD-ROM and Zip disk, I found out all of this the hard way. My computer is now set up with the DVD-ROM, CD-RW and Zip drives on IDE1 and IDE2, and my ATA/100 hard disks on the high speed IDE3 and IDE4 connectors.

When you buy a retail-packaged hard drive, the manufacturer usually includes a bootable diskette with installation and utility programs. Since a new drive is usually larger and faster than the current disk, the utility program often has an option to copy the contents of your current boot drive to the new one and set up the new disk as the boot drive. Although the drive manufactur-

ers tout their products' ATA/66 or ATA/100 compliance, the utility programs on their installation diskettes can only see hard drives attached to the IDE1 and IDE2 connectors. So on my system, that diskette was no help.

It was, of course, my intention to make the new and larger drive my boot disk. Since Maxtor's Max-Blast disk couldn't see my drives to copy the partition image, another method was needed. Simply using DOS or Windows copy-functions or programs to copy a bootable partition to a different drive doesn't work too well. Although all of the necessary data seems to be on the new drive, the computer will not recognize it as a boot disk. Every time I attempted this, I had to reinstall Windows to make the drive work. But there is a better way.

The key to my success is PartitionMagic from PowerQuest. This program is more than just a user-friendly FDISK, able to re-size partitions without destroying the data that they contain. It can also exactly duplicate a partition. I used this copy function to replicate my C: and D: partitions from the old drive to the new one. Next it's moving and re-sizing functions adjusted those partitions to fill the new drive. In Windows 98, PartitionMagic has to reboot to a DOS mode to make these changes. Windows Me does not have a DOS mode; however, since version 6.0 supports that operating system, PowerQuest must have developed a work-around for that problem.

PartitionMagic is a powerful tool, but fairly user-friendly. Use it with care, and always back up your data before you fiddle with partitions.



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Ontrack Internet Cleanup™ Version 2.0

Software Review

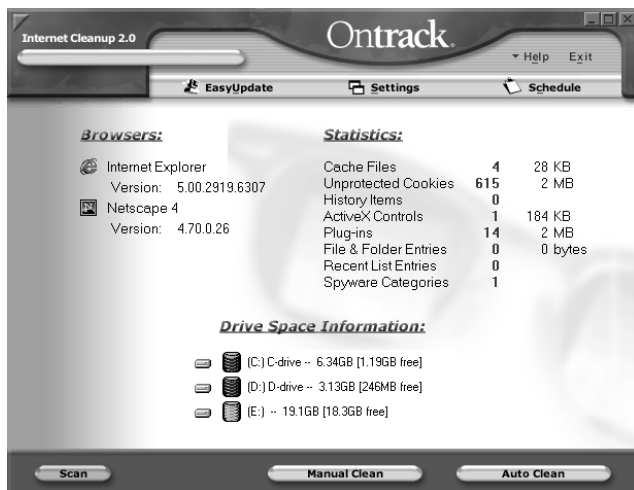
By: Paul Kurivchack - PPCUG

Ontrack Data International sent our group the latest version of their internet browser cleaning software for testing and review.

When I first received Internet Cleanup™, I was not sure why I needed such an application. I already have Ontracks' SystemSuite™ 3.0 running on my PC which includes internet cleaning tools. But on my second look at the manual and checking SystemSuite I found that this application adds additional features in a very easy to use, one stop utility. Some of the key features of Internet Cleanup are the removal of Cookies, cleaning Browser Cache and History files, ActiveX controls and Spyware. It is hard to believe how fast the cache files will grow if you do not clean them out regularly (my daughter had over 90 MB of cache files on her PC).

Installation was a snap on my PC. Internet Cleanup will run on even older 486 PC's running Windows 95 but a Pentium running all versions of Windows 9X, Me, NT4.0, or 2000, RAM is recommended at 8 MB but if you are that low, Win 9X won't run and at least 28 MB of free space on your hard drive. Make sure you accept the prompt for the short cut on your desk top for Internet Cleanup. It makes for the easiest launch possible,

Double clicking the Internet Clean Now! icon or the traditional way of Start / Programs / Internet Cleanup / Internet Cleanup starts the application. It immediately starts in scan mode, scanning for Cache Files, Cookies, History items, ActiveX, Plug-ins, Spyware categories along with the space used, your installed brows-



ers with version number and drive space of your hard drives. Quite a bit of information on one easy to read screen. At this point your choices are Manual Clean or Auto Clean. Auto Clean is just that. It deletes all the Cache files and History items in one fell swoop. Not bad for a quick cleanup.

The Manual Clean feature gives you total control over each cleaning function along with giving details of all the files to be cleaned. This is especially important when cleaning unwanted



cookies. There will be times that you will want to keep certain cookies and here is where the cookie can be locked so the clean function will not delete them. Pretty cool feature to be able to lock the cookies.

In addition, Internet Cleanup has a Settings feature which allows further fine tuning of the cleaning process, a Scheduler which allows you to auto schedule to cleanup process on System Startup or Shutdown, at a specific time each day or when you exit your browser. The scheduler feature is helpful with DSL or Cable Modem connections that are always on using the specific time function as you may not always shutdown your PC daily.

Lastly, like all Ontrack products EasyUpdate is included with Internet Cleanup. I have found that Ontracks internet update is the easiest to use, fast and complete. I used it with Internet Cleanup and also with my SystemSuite 3.0 with great results.

If you do a lot of surfing and forget where to find or use Internet Explorer's or Netscape's cache and history cleanup tools, Internet Cleanup is a natural utility application to have on your PC.

Visit Ontrack Data, www.ontrack.com for additional information and purchase of Internet Cleanup or any of the great Ontrack products.

Minutes for the General Meeting June 12, 2001

By: Don Arrowsmith

This was a joint meeting with the Princeton Macintosh User Group (PMUG <http://www.pmug-nj.org/>) held at Princeton University's Jadwin Hall. After a welcome by PMUG and a short Q&A, we were treated to an excellent presentation by Douglas Dixon of Sarnoff Corp. concerning Streaming Web Media. He focused on markets, players, and tools for the three main streaming formats (Apple QuickTime, RealNetworks RealMedia, and Microsoft Windows Media) in an informative and easy to understand style. PDF files with the slides for this one-hour presentation are available online at www.manifest-tech.com in the What's New section.

Minutes for the General Meeting May 14, 2001

By: Don Arrowsmith

The meeting got under way at about 7:45 PM with a demonstration by Rick Skinner of Digital Arts and Graphics (<http://www.digitalag.com/>) of a Polaroid XGA video projector (<http://www.digitalag.com/lcd.html>). This unit would replace the club's outdated LCD projector panel. The Polaroid unit was very readable and has many extra features. At around 8:45 Paul Kurivchack and Tom Canavan began the main program which showed various PC internal components: motherboards, memory modules, peripheral cards, hard drives, etc. The intent was to familiarize users with their appearance and how to replace existing parts with updated parts displaying better performance.

Minutes for the Board Meeting May 24, 2001

By: Don Arrowsmith

The meeting was held at the Hopewell Branch of the Mercer County Library beginning at 7:30 PM. Receipt of a \$250 check from Ken Gordon brought the total net profit from the TCF Pickup Area project to \$697.14. Approval was granted to procure the Polaroid 750 lumen video projector at an approximate cost of \$2990. Current total membership is 64 paid users. Suggestions for a PPCUG logo were solicited. The logo would be used on shirts or other merchandise. A Ziff-Davis Click Thru may be added to the PPCUG web site to generate additional revenue.

Windows Tips continued from page 3

lems that are not always easy to pinpoint. The easiest thing to do when the My Documents folder gets very slow at opening may be to create a new folder in a convenient place and to move some of your files there.

Another likely cause is low system resources. Too many windows open, too many programs running, fancy wallpaper, or not having rebooted in a day or so can all drain resources. (A discussion of resources is given in the article at http://www.ppcug-nj.org/articles/vic_laurie/resources.html.) Other ways to speed up the opening of your folders include defragging, turning off Active Desktop, turning off animation effects, and increasing the icon cache. As a last resort, those who are familiar with the Registry (and who understand how to back up and restore same) can try deleting the two following Registry keys and then rebooting.

```
HkeyCurrentUser\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\StreamMRU
```

```
HkeyCurrentUser\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\Streams
```

These keys will regenerate but any customized folder settings will be lost with all settings returned to the default.

Close It Up

Here are some shortcuts to closing windows and programs.

If you have drilled down several layers deep from a parent folder (for example `\MyFolder\MyStuff\MyData\MyStocks\`) and want to close all open windows at once, hold down the Shift key and click the X in the upper right corner of the last folder opened (for example, `MyStocks`). All folders from `My Folder` on down will close.

A quick way to close the presently active window or program is the keyboard shortcut `Alt+F4`. For example, I have found that this gets you out of AOL faster than any other way I have tried. If you click on an open spot on the Desktop or Taskbar, followed by `Alt+F4`, you will bring up the menu for shutting down the whole computer.

Within a given application, `Ctrl+F4` will close down the active file or window but not the application. Thus, if you have a number of Word files open and want to close down one or two while leaving Word running, use this shortcut. Note that `Alt+F4` will close Word completely. It will ask about saving any open files first, however. A similar situation holds for other programs where multiple open files are possible.

Sometimes it is desirable to close most running programs. For example, during Defrag it is better to make sure nothing is running in the background. Also when installing new programs, it is often a good idea to close up other programs. Rather than try to figure out what is running and then go through closing one program at a time, make use of *PC Magazine's* free utility **EndItAll**, which can be downloaded at <http://www.zdnet.com/downloads/stories/info/0,,0011NB,.html>. This handy utility provides a very quick and easy way to terminate all non-essential programs. I recommend it.



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(Last Update: June 30, 2001)

Send Updates to kurivchack_p@compuserve.com for inclusion in this listing.

Minutes for the Linux SIG

June 11, 2001

By: Jon Abolins

The Linux SIG/Workgroup meeting of June 11 had various technical problems that ate into the demo. I learned the hard way that with the particular computer and the Linux version running on it, the video output is not compatible with the LCD panel. The text only mode was OK but the VGA GUI mode needed for the presentation was not rendered on the panel.

So I had to go through two Linux reinstalls with different versions to find one that works with the LCD panel. (The earlier pre-ETTC presentations had been done with Caldera which was more compatible. This presentation I was using SuSe which was totally incompatible. Red Hat 7.1 got us in GUI projections.)

So three-quarters of the meeting was a review of Linux installations. With the people attending it was OK because most of them were chatting about technology and about Linux distributions. Just don't want more such glitches.

I am considering having a summer hiatus to regroup the Linux meetings, to find a steady meeting place, get the machine/projector issues squared away, come up with a queue of topics in advance (rather than scrambling for a topic each month and learning enough about it to present it), etc.

J.D. Abolins

Meyda Online—Infosec & Privacy Studies

Web: <http://www.meydabbs.com>

I noticed that the desktop PC must be in the eyes of the manufactures, just like a toaster to be shown only on the shelves at Wal-Mart or on a web page. Yes, IBM, Compaq, Gateway, and Toshiba were there, primarily showing laptops, as it is where the profit margins are, as were a number of peripheral hardware manufacturers. But nothing overly exciting or that has not been seen before.

The show really could have been called the PDA show as Palm Computing was also there with an extremely large booth. Accompanying Palm was HandSpring along with many more companies showing add on's for the various PDA's from software applications to hardware such as cameras, GPS or keyboards. It is funny how the manufactures are trying to make the PDA into a subminiature laptop computer but now with all the add on's, it will still weight as much as a normal laptop without the larger screen or the profits for the company to stay in business.

Wireless service was also another big thing at the show. If you want to connect your PDA or laptop to a wireless network or service provider, they were there in force. Paying service fees seems to be the new model for companies to stay in business. Everyone wants you to pay them their fifty dollar a month fee for some service. My question to all of these companies is how many twenty five, thirty or fifty dollar a month fees is the average business user willing to pay let alone the average Joe? Not many I suspect.

Software companies was also absent in large numbers. Microsoft was there promoting Pocket PC's and some other things, but it was clear that the likes of Adobe, Corel and many others were not there in the large presences of the past. It is a shame as those vendors made the show exciting plus always had great give a-ways.

Speaking of give a-ways. Remember the good old days when you went home with two large shopping bags bursting at the seams, well not this year. If it wasn't for a mailing to stop by and pick up a software application, I would have brought next to nothing home. Pity the poor soles that went on Thursday, they didn't even get a bag to fill let along give a-ways. And talks about cheap, lollipops were the candy of choice at many of the booths this year, no chocolates, or candy bars of the past.

Is this a sign of the times for the PC market or just the demise of all the Dot Comm.'s and the poor economy that is making these shows a thing of the past? I hope not. Trade shows have always served the purpose of getting the word out about a new product or service that needs to be touched and felt. To see the latest and greatest of new products that may or may not make the world a better place to work and play. Let all hope that the economy picks up and companies are willing to spend money on shows like TECHX or even to bring back the PC to PCEXPO.



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