

English Academic Technology Bulletin 12 (February 9, 2004)

Editor: Alicia Pousada, Academic Technology Committee

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Welcome to the **English Academic Technology Bulletin**. This monthly publication of the English list communicates basic information regarding the use of technology in the preparation and imparting of instruction. The English list is a closed, moderated list restricted to the staff of the English Department of the College of Humanities of the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras campus and other authorized users. If you are interested in subscribing to the English list or contributing content to the bulletin, please notify Alicia Pousada (apousada@earthlink.net), the list moderator. To post to the list, just Reply to this message. Remember that what you post will go to every subscriber.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our new department website is moving ahead with great speed. You can check on its progress by going to: <http://home.coqui.net/gcrti/UPR/index.htm>. Please be sure to report any errors, oversights, or additions to either Alicia Pousada apousada@earthlink.net or webmaster@thelinq.com.

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NEWBIES CORNER

This column will be devoted to simple maintenance practices that even a novice can manage.

[Creating an emergency startup disk](#)

A startup disk contains the necessary files to start up your machine if anything goes wrong with your hard drive. It is absolutely crucial to have such a disk whenever you begin troubleshooting or playing around with your machine. It can literally save the day for you when crisis strikes (which it will one day).

For Windows, do the following:

1. Choose Start/Settings/Control Panel.
2. Double-click on Add/Remove Programs.
3. Click the Startup Disk tab.
4. Click on Create Disk
5. Place a blank diskette in your floppy drive.
6. Click OK.
7. Wait for the needed files to be copied onto your disk. (You may be prompted to insert your Windows CD into the CD-ROM drive).
8. When the startup diskette is complete, click OK, and you're finished.

Store the startup disk in a safe place.

For Mac OS 10, you don't need to create an emergency startup disk. Just reboot from the Mac OS X Installation CD.

Keeping your hard drive clean

The more you use your computer, the dirtier and more cluttered it becomes. Your computer saves temporary versions of files, retains bits of uninstalled programs, and all sorts of flotsam and jetsam on your hard drive. In addition, whenever it saves any document or program, it puts the elements in the closest, most convenient spot on the disk, not necessarily in spaces that are adjoining. As a result, over time, the disk becomes fragmented, and whenever you try to access a particular file, the disk head has to look all over the disk to read what you want. This tends to slow things down considerably.

To prevent the slowdown and open up space for saving more stuff in Windows, regularly run Disk Clean and Disk Defragmenter.

These two programs come with all versions of Windows from Win 98 on (Disk Defragmenter is even available under Win 95) and can be accessed by going to: Start→Programs→Accessories→System Tools. Click on the program you desire, and then follow the on-screen directions. Disk Clean won't take too long to operate; however, Disk Defragmenter can take hours depending on how big a hard drive you have and how fragmented the files are.

It's advisable to run Disk Clean after every session on the computer, but Disk Defragmenter is only necessary every couple of weeks. You can automate the running of these two programs by running Schedule Tasks, also located in the System Tools folder where you found Disk Clean and Disk Defragmenter.

If you use Mac OS 10, use your Disk Utility program (located in your Utilities folder inside your Applications folder) to check for disk errors and permission errors. For some unknown reason, Macs don't come with a defragmenter, so use Norton Speed Disk to defragment at least every couple of weeks.

UTILIZING TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Preparing effective handouts

Handouts can be extremely useful in college teaching of all kinds. A good handout encapsulates what you cover in class and allows students to see at a glance what you consider to be important content.

For guidelines on preparing effective handouts, go to:

<http://lrs.stcloudstate.edu/cim/courses/pine/print/handout.html>

Using video clips

The Open Video Project [<http://www.open-video.org/>] is sponsored by the [School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill](#). It collects and makes available a repository of digitized video content for the digital video, multimedia retrieval, digital library, and other research communities. Researchers can use the video to study a wide range of problems.

Video clips are available in MPEG-1, MPEG-2, MPEG-4, and QuickTime formats. and genre characteristics (student television, anthropological footage, technology demonstrations) of the video. As part of our work at UNC's [Interaction Design Lab](#), we are also doing research on creating innovative interfaces to the video repository that enable users to more easily search, browse, preview, and evaluate the video in the collection.

USEFUL INTERNET SITES

[Questia](#) [<http://www.questia.com>] is a super on-line library with over 47,000 books and 375,000 journal, magazine, and newspaper articles. All books and

articles are available in their entirety, and you can search every page. Questia facilitates writing by creating footnotes and bibliographies automatically. It also allows you to organize your work with the highlighter and project folders. It provides on-line books that you can download for free.

Visual Thesaurus is a great reference when you need to find just the right word for something that you only know by sight and have no idea what to call. Consult it at: <http://www.visualthesaurus.com/online/index.html>

American Folklore

For those of you teaching courses in American literature, Afro-American literature, dialects of American English, or popular culture, the following site may be of use: <http://www.americanfolklore.net/>. It contains American folktales categorized by: title, region, famous characters, themes, etc. There are even simplified versions of folktales appropriate for ESL learners.

Pay special attention to the section marked Teachers and Students which has great links to other sites giving specialized information regarding the academic study of folklore.

New on-line linguistics journal

The folks at Dartmouth have just come out with a new linguistics journal titled: ***Linguistic Discovery***. Edited by Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley (authors of the best-selling ***Endangered languages***), this journal will only exist in digital form. It is dedicated to the description and analysis of primary linguistic data, and all of its articles contain original or hard-to-access data from a wide variety of languages. The underlying philosophy of the journal is that exposure to diverse linguistic data is critical for theorizing. Read more about this journal and subscribe at: <http://journals.dartmouth.edu/ljournal/about.html> .

TALGS

A new web site has been set up called TESOL/Applied Linguistics Graduate Students. <http://core.ecu.edu/engl/talgs/>. Its purpose is to help graduate students who are involved in TESOL and Applied Linguistics by providing a forum for announcements and discussions of on-going issues. It comes out of the TESOL/Linguistics program at East Carolina University.

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FREEWARE

IESpell 2.0.1

IESpell checks the spelling on text you enter into online forms. If you're using Web e-mail, posting to a newsgroup, or blogging, you could make your point come across more clearly--and save yourself a lot of embarrassment--by making sure you've spelled everything in good English. IESpell stores your own personal word list across all your applications, so you don't need to teach every Web app you use how to spell your unusual name.

Download IESpell now at:

http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,23109,tk,hsx,00.asp

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MAC NUGGETS

MacWorld

To keep up with the latest developments in Steve Job's universe, check out Mac World Magazine at: <http://www.macworld.com>. This site is packed with information regarding new software and hardware, updates, tips, utilities, troubleshooting advice, etc. You can also sign up for Mac newsletters that will be delivered with your e-mail and keep you abreast of changes, problems, and solutions. In addition, you can check out the forums that discuss all sorts of issues involving Macs. Your question may turn out to be one that's been discussed and resolved by Mac users, and you may have the answer to someone else's query.

Useful tricks

--In OS X, if you go to the "About this Mac" dialog box (apple menu -> about this Mac) then click on the "version 10.2.8" (or what ever the number is) it changes and tell you the computers' build number and serial number.

--In OSX, there is an extremely useful display tool called Apple System Profiler located in the Utilities folder within your Applications folder. (You can also get to from your Apple menu. Just click About this Mac and the click the More Info button.) The System Profiler window gives you're an overview of your software, hardware, memory, and network configurations. This can be critical when something has gone wrong, and you need to track down the culprit.

--Special start-up keys

Mac OS X includes some really handy keys that can be used during the boot process when you want to force your machine to do something.

--To boot from a CD or DVD, restart your Mac while pressing the C key.

--To eject a stubborn disk that doesn't show up on the Desktop, restart your Mac and hold down the mouse button.

--To force your Mac to boot in Mac OS X, hold down the X key while restarting.

--To display a system boot menu, hold down the Option key while restarting and choose the operating system you want.

--To prevent start-up applications from running during login, hold down the Shift key while you click the Login button on the Login screen. If the Login screen doesn't appear during startup, hold down the Shift while your machine boots until the Finder menu appears.

[Source: Chambers, Mark L. 2003. *Mac OS X for Dummies*, p. 118.]

USEFUL DOWNLOADS

NoteTab Light

NoteTab Light is a free, basic word processing program that is more powerful than either WordPad or Notepad, yet much less bulky than Word. It is sparing of your system's resources and great for HTML editing or anything else that doesn't require advanced formatting. Like Word, it allows you to open many documents simultaneously and toggle between them using tabs, write in different fonts, and use search and replace tools, as well as macros. It is available at: http://www.pcworld.com/downloads/file_description/0,fid,7710,tk,hsx,00.asp.

Weapons for fighting spam (click on names for link to site)

Bounce Spam Mail (freeware)

Send spammers fake bounce messages so that they leave you alone.

SpamCatcher (shareware)

Eliminate spam by creating rules that identify and blacklist bulk email.

MailWasher v2.0.40 (shareware)

Powerful tool filters, bounces, blacklists, and deletes spam.

Sam Spade v1.14 (freeware)

Level the playing field against spammers with this network-query suite of tools.

SpamKiller v4.0 (shareware)

Stop spam dead in its tracks and let the sender know about it.

TECHNOLOGY QUOTATIONS

If computers get too powerful, we can organize them into a committee. That will do them in.

- *Bradley's Bromide*

The telephone wire, as we know it, has become too slow and too small to handle Internet traffic. It took 75 years for telephones to be used by 50 million customers, but it took only four years for the Internet to reach that many users.

- *Lori Valigra*

[Source: http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/0,,sid9_gci534467,00.html]

"The computer allows you to make mistakes faster than any other invention, with the possible exception of handguns and tequila." — *Mitch Ratcliffe*.

"Reading computer manuals without the hardware is as frustrating as reading sex manuals without the software." — *Arthur C. Clarke*.

[Source: <http://www.gdargaud.net/Humor/QuotesComputer.html>]

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CYBERHUMOR

Murphy's Laws of Computing

1. When computing, whatever happens, behave as though you meant it to happen.
2. When you get to the point where you really understand your computer, it's probably obsolete.
3. The first place to look for information is in the section of the manual where you least expect to find it.
4. When the going gets tough, upgrade.
5. For every action, there is an equal and opposite malfunction.

6. To err is human... to blame your computer for your mistakes is even more human, it is downright natural.
7. He who laughs last probably made a back-up.
8. If at first you do not succeed, blame your computer.
9. A complex system that does not work is invariably found to have evolved from a simpler system that worked just fine.
10. The number one cause of computer problems is computer solutions.
11. A computer program will always do what you tell it to do, but rarely what you want to do.

[Source: <http://www.gdargaud.net/Humor/QuotesComputer.html>]