

Mountain Bits & Bytes

The Award Winning Monthly Publication of the Mountain Computer User Group

Vol. 10 Issue #9
September 2010

What is the world's fastest supercomputer?

IBM BlueGene/L (BGL). It is powered by 65,536 dual-processor computer nodes, and is located on a 2,500-square-foot marvel at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, CA. It has been rated fastest in the world after clocking a sustained performance of 280.6 trillion operations per second, or teraflops.

The first computer "bug" was a real bug.

In 1947, engineers found a moth in Panel F, Relay #70 of the Harvard Mark 1 system. The computer was running a test of its multiplier and adder when the engineers noticed something was wrong. The moth was trapped, removed and taped into the computer's logbook with the words: "first actual case of a bug being found."

What's Inside

Is The Internet Committing Slow Suicide?	Page 2
Tom's Tips	Page 4
Bits & PCs Swap Shop	Page 4
Meet Jim Bell	Page 5
From The Deals Guy for September	Page 6
Birthday's, Anniversaries & Calendar.	Page 8

GREETINGS all you MCUG'ers:

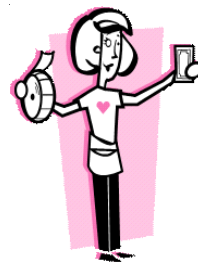
If the Summer heat and/or rainfall has been a little much for you, come on out to the Mountain Computer User Group on Monday, 13 September 2010. The meeting will be held in modern air conditioning. You will get a two hour respite from the heat, and receive a whole lot of good computer information, along with some fellowship.

After the 6 PM Question and Answer session, Art Frenz, MCUG Board Member will tell us all about Ubuntu.



I won't try to tell you what Ubuntu is, I don't really know, that's Art's program.

If anyone has a subject they would like to see presented in a future meeting, please let one of the Board members know about it.



As usual there will be door prizes for our members, and an opportunity to procure tickets for our next raffle.

Looking forward to your participation.

Rea Williams, MCUG President

Mountain Computer User Group
P.O. Box 474
Young Harris, GA. 30582

Officers for 2010**President**

Rea Williams reaw@brmemc.net

Vice President

Vacant

Past President

Jim Bell jimbell7@verizon.net

Secretary/Treasurer

George Donegan
gd0negan29@windstream.net

Publisher/Editor

Tom Allen bunkerhilltom@yahoo.com

Webmaster

Randy Gehring rgehring@visi.com

Board of Directors for 2010

Bob Greenhaw bbgreenhaw@brmemc.net

Art Frenz art.diane.frenz@gmail.com

Randy Gehring rgehring@visi.com

Paul Filer pinkfink@windstream.net

MCUG Monthly Meeting Schedule

The regular monthly meeting of the Mountain Computer User Group (MCUG) is held on the second Monday of every month, at 7 p.m., in the Wilson Lecture Hall (Room 201) of the Goolsby Building on the campus of Young Harris College in Young Harris, GA. All regular monthly meetings and SIGs are open to everyone regardless of membership status.

MCUG Membership

Annual dues are \$20 and extend membership privileges to two (2) members of a household. Membership privileges include: special discounts on vendor products, access to products for evaluation and review, and association with a great bunch of people.

Affiliation

The Mountain Computer User Group is a member of APCUG, a nonprofit international organization dedicated to promoting communications between PC user groups and the computer industry.

Group Purpose

The Mountain Computer User Group is a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational organization without corporate or vendor affiliation. Its purpose is the encouragement and advancement of computer information and knowledge through "users helping users".

Is the Internet Committing Slow Suicide?

by Jon Mazur, President of CUser Group

There has been much buzz - especially in the tech community - over proposed legislation that would allow the president to seize control of or shut down the Internet by declaring a national emergency. It's being called a "kill switch," although the process would obviously be much more complicated than that term implies. What the bill actually does is require broadband providers, software companies, search engines, etc. to "immediately comply with any emergency measure or action" that is ordered: <http://www.wxpnnews.com/73ONLA/100621-Kill-Switch>

Many Americans are outraged by the idea, but the basic premise isn't new. When the U.S. entered World War I in 1917, most of the country's radio stations were shut down or taken over by the government. It was even illegal for private citizens to possess operational radio transmitters or receivers. <http://www.wxpnnews.com/73ONLA/100621-Radio-History>

So, for those who scoff at the thought that the president would ever actually /use/ such powers, it's happened before (albeit with a different communications technology). It could happen again. Would it go as far this time? Would we find ourselves labeled criminals just for possessing computers and routers? Sounds absurd, doesn't it? But stop and think of some of the things that would have seemed absurd two decades ago but which have come about in the last decade: red light cameras, a child arrested for drawing on a school desk, a 12-year-old charged with a crime for opening his Christmas present early: <http://www.wxpnnews.com/73ONLA/100621-Child-Arrest>

Of course, the current "kill switch" bill puts an unprecedented amount of power in the hands of the president. Shutting down the Internet would have much more far-reaching consequences than shutting down radio broadcasts. Millions of people depend on the Internet to make a living, to stay in touch with their family members, to pay their bills and buy goods; it's much more than just a venue for disseminating news.

When I first went online in the 1980s, the Internet was like the final frontier. It was a "place" that most people didn't even know existed, and it was a mostly unregulated "wild west" that operated on the honor system - and did so amazingly well. Of course, people who are working in government or academia or who are paying \$25/hour for the privilege of signing on tend to be relatively well behaved. The commercialization of the Internet in the 1990s brought in a broader demographic, and as access costs dropped and free access became widely available and Internet service came to be viewed as a "human right," the same thing happened to the 'Net that happens when small communities grow into big cities. The anonymity of large numbers brought out the worst in many people, and the criminal element moved in.

The next step was inevitable: well-intentioned folks bent on protecting Internet innocents from the bad boys got involved. Laws were passed. Nobody could argue with laws designed to protect children from predators, and few took issue with laws against cyberstalking, online fraud and the like. Electronic junk mail became a big problem and we got laws like the CAN SPAM Act. Music companies started losing money and we got laws like the DMCA. Software companies got up in arms about piracy and we got laws like the No Electronic Theft (NET) Act. People discovered a way to make money by buying up domain names that had the potential to become popular and we got laws like the Anti-Cybersquatting Consumer Protection Act (ACPA). The 109th Congress introduced over a thousand bills that referenced the Internet. And the rush to regulate the 'Net goes on.

Otto von Bismarck is credited with the saying that "laws are like sausages. It's better not to see them being made." Anyone who has been involved with the legislative process at any level knows that it's fraught with tradeoffs and compromises and prayers and promises. Often the finished piece of legislation is nothing like it started out - and may be full of confusion and contradictions and vagueness that makes it either unenforceable or makes criminals out of good people. And many of the laws regulating the Internet have had unintended consequences. A few years ago, Eric Goldman put together a list of the (in his opinion) best and worst Internet laws: <http://www.wxnews.com/73ONLA/100621-Internet-Laws>

I guess a law giving the government total control of the Internet in our country is the ultimate progression of this trend toward more and more regulation. But you don't have to go that far to change the Internet drastically. One regulatory movement that has gotten a lot of support because it sounds so good on the surface is the push for "net neutrality." Prohibiting "discrimination" always sounds like a good idea, and net neutrality laws purport to make service providers treat all Internet traffic equally. What's the problem with that? Well, one problem is that recent studies show that such rules are likely to cost the U.S. from half a million to 1.5 million jobs and up to \$62 billion in lost gross domestic product. Sure, one of the studies was sponsored by AT&T and other service providers - who aren't exactly neutral in this matter - but it's hard to dispute the contention that government micromanagement of business usually ends up costing much more than anticipated: <http://www.wxnews.com/73ONLA/100621-Net-Neutrality>

Some analysts contend that net neutrality laws caused and will speed up the trend toward bandwidth caps and metered service structures and will result in the death of the unlimited data plan that's still common in the U.S. (although not in some other countries). AT&T recently did away with the unlimited plans for their smart phones

and Verizon is said to be considering following in their footsteps. <http://www.wxnews.com/73ONLA/100621-Cellphone-Data-Tracking>

The troubling thing is that this move toward capping usage comes at the same time we are being pushed hard to use much /more/ bandwidth. Devices are being designed to handle streaming video and audio and the tech industry is trying to drag us all, kicking and screaming, into the Cloud - where none of our data will reside on our computers and even using a simple word processing or photo editing application will require connecting to the Internet (and using precious bandwidth). These two trends may look great to providers, who hope to make a killing off charging us per-megabyte or per-gigabyte for greatly increased usage. But it sounds like an oil and water mixture for consumers, and it's hard to say how many - especially those who have only recently embraced online activity - will balk at the high cost and go back to doing things the old fashioned way.

Another consequence of net neutrality laws and other impending regulations predicted by some analysts is that the carriers won't build out their networks as they had been planning to do. AT&T said in the Wall Street Journal recently that if the FCC enacts net neutrality rules, the company will reevaluate whether to expand their U-verse service any further, and I heard from people who work with Verizon that company may have ditched some of its plans to expand its FiOS services because of the regulatory atmosphere. <http://www.wxnews.com/73ONLA/100621-Drop-Net-Neutrality>.

Does all of this add up to a Perfect Storm that could tear the Internet to bits - or at least stop its progress dead in its tracks? Perhaps there's no need for the president to have a "kill switch" if the Internet is slowly committing suicide. As I opined here over a year ago, we might look back one day soon and realize that we lived in the golden age of digital communications. Our children and grandchildren, instead of having wondrous technologies that go far beyond what we have today, may listen in wonder to our tales of a time when you could go online anytime you wanted, stay connected all day, download all manner of content, access web sites with political views that differed from those of the administration in power, get plenty of work done on a computer even without an Internet connection - all this without being wealthy or "connected" in the other sense of the word.

I hope that's not how it plays out.

Tell us what you think. Does the trend toward more and more laws regulating the Internet make you wary, or do you think they're badly needed? Are the warnings that over-regulation will cause carriers and providers to pull

Tom's Tip of the Month

Start protecting your identity on your computer for free and see the power of Identity Finder. Simply download, install, and run Identity Finder on your computer to find credit cards numbers and passwords that are vulnerable to identity theft and fraud. You can search files that commonly contain PII like Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Adobe PDF, text, html, and rtf. Once found, use powerful PII removal tools to permanently delete files, remove passwords from Firefox and Internet Explorer, and secure sensitive information. Use additional built-in security tools like the Identity Finder File Vault and Shredder to make sure your identity is safe on your computer.

To get additional search and remediation strength, explore the Home and Professional Editions. Businesses should contact Identity Finder for a free evaluation copy of Enterprise Client for Windows. Take the first step towards protecting your family by trying Identity Finder today.

<http://www.identityfinder.com/us/Home/IdentityFinder/Windows/Free>

Search For Free

Use free PII removal tools to store passwords in a secure Password Vault, Shred any file including your insecure Recycle Bin, Encrypt any file with a password, and clean up your Web Browsers.

Find Sensitive Data

Search within files and web browsers to find unsecured Credit Card Numbers and Passwords.

Protect Your Identity

Secure your sensitive data by permanently shredding the items you don't need and encrypting those that you want to keep safe.

BITS & PCs

FOR SALE

1M USB A to Mini-B 2.0 cable

3 feet long \$2.00

Vipre AntiVirus software

Antivirus and Anti Spyware

\$2.00 each (Eight copies available)

DVI-D to DVI-D cable

Connect your DVI-D LCD, Plasma TV, or HDTV to your DVI-D computer 10 feet.

\$2.00 each (2 available)

Cassette Adapter Universal for MP3

\$2.00 each (2 available)

Belden USB Parallel Printer Adapter Cable

\$2.00 (3 available)

Ink Jet Cartridges

HP-51645A

\$1.00 each (2 available)

IEEE 1284 Printer Cable 10 feet long

(DB25 male to Centronics36 male)

\$2.00

Above prices are negotiable

Email Rea Williams @ reaw@brmemc.net or
Tom Allen @ bunkerhilltom@brmemc.net

For Sale, Kodak Carousel Slide Projector w/
12 carousel slide holders & large screen.
\$75.00

Call George @ [\(706\)379-0663](tel:(706)379-0663)

Meet Jim Bell, Past President and Computer Repair Business Owner.

Jim Bell, our current Past President, is a long standing member of the Mountain Computer Users Group. He has served as Vice President and President. Although born in Pennsylvania, he has made himself at home in the North Carolina Appalachians. His father was a professor at North Carolina State University in Raleigh which put him in North Carolina almost long enough for him to claim native status. He and his wife Billie have two children. Their son is a professor at the University of Wisconsin and their daughter has just moved to Duluth, GA and is seeking a job in her teaching profession.



In 1969 he attended North Carolina University in Chapel Hill and earned a degree in business administration. At East Carolina University in Greenville, he earned an MLS degree in 1975. He became interested in computers around 1982 when he acquired his first computer, a Texas Instruments 99/4A after he became the Director of the Tri-County Community College Library in Murphy (Peachtree), NC. There he set up the first computer laboratory for the institution and soon became the Vice President of Technology. He retired from that position in 2005. A love for computing inspired him to enter the computer business as an entrepreneur shortly before retiring, operating Brasstown Computer Services. He has certification with Microsoft Windows XP, Novell Networks, Cisco and Comp TIA. Jim is currently teaching an intermediate computer class at the Tri-State Community College.

Jim has a love for the game of bridge and is a certified director of bridge games and plays

every Wednesday night. Among his other hobbies is coin collecting; he is the current president of Mountain Coin Club.

* * * * *

Computer Related Quotations

Part of the inhumanity of the computer is that, once it is competently programmed and working smoothly, it is completely honest

.- Isaac Asimov (1920 - 1992)

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

- Bill Gates

Not even computers will replace committees, because committees buy computers.

- Edsger W. Dijkstra

Why is it drug addicts and computer aficionados are both called users? - Bradley's Bromide

Programming today is a race between software engineers striving to build bigger and better idiot-proof programs, and the Universe trying to produce bigger and better idiots. So far, the Universe is winning. - Pierre Gallois

(Continued from page 3)

back on their investments just "Chicken Little" hype or is there a real chance that all this government intervention will end up making a mess of things? Is it a good idea, or a horrible one, to give the president the authority to "pull the plug" on the 'Net, or is it naïve to think he didn't already have that power anyway? We invite you to discuss this topic in our forum at <http://www.wxnews.com/73ONLA/100621-Forum-Discussion>

From The Deals Guy For September 2010 by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

I finally finished my article about creating trade shows and should have it posted on my Web site about the middle of August. Its lengthy, but you may find it interesting.

I'm not a very ambitious person so I often do things the hard way until I finally give in and see about doing, at least something, easier. One example is with my computer's cursor, which I often lose on the page, and have to find it. I always use a large arrowhead cursor, which works fairly well for me, but a printed page makes the cursor harder to follow because it changes into a thin I-beam. After fumbling for the cursor that way for a few years, I was finally prompted by a newsletter article to check in the Control Panel > Mouse, and the pointer options tab where I found a box to check to show the location of the pointer with a series of concentric circles emanating from the cursor when pressing Ctrl. It was so simple to find and how stupid of me not to have looked into that long ago, and it only took me about a minute to do it. I hope you aren't that lazy. I've mentioned it to a couple of other people and they said they were unaware that you could set up something like that. I knew it, but a newsletter article finally pushed me to do it.

Sometimes a confusing experience needs a fix that can't be put off. One night I had a problem with a flash drive that I keep my DealsGuy files on. If I'm working on a DealsGuy column, I normally plug that flash drive in first and it becomes my D drive. Each evening when I'm shutting down my machine, I plug in a larger flash drive for my backup, which becomes my E drive since the DealsGuy flash drive is D. That larger flash drive "has" to be my E drive when I use it because that's where the backup is set to backup my data files.

However, one evening when beginning my session, I plugged in my DealsGuy flash drive and it became my E drive, in spite of the fact that

there was no D drive. I wondered why it did that, but all my tries, including rebooting the computer, failed to give it the drive letter I needed. I rebooted with that flash drive plugged in, and without it, then plugging it in, with no success. I even tried different USB plugs on the computer. I had used it the night before as an E drive simply to retrieve a file, but how would it get stuck on being an E drive? I had no idea, but needed help.

Maybe I needed to juggle my flash drives somehow, but I was stumped. I looked everywhere I could think of for instructions to try changing the setting of the drive's letter, and the computer's help was a lost cause for me. I knew "changing drive letters" was possible because I used it to establish my DVD drive letter when I originally set up this computer.

I called several friends who didn't have the answer, and finally called a friend in another state who I knew would have the answer if he was home. He thought my request was stupid, but finally humored me with the step-by-step procedure, and it was simple: My OS is XP and he had me go to Control Panel, Administrative Tools, Computer Management, and then Disk Management; and there was the procedure to accomplish the drive letter change. It was simple, but not to me until I was shown where to do it. My problem was solved. Thank God for my user group friends! My limited computer knowledge has come from my user group friends, and I have learned very little from "Help" (F1). On the other hand, I've seen the gurus do well with Help.

*Good Help To Organize Your Desktop

A while back Hewie Poplock <<http://www.hewie.net>>, who heads the Windows SIG for Central Florida Computer Society, and also writes a monthly column called "Hewie's Favorites," demonstrated something called "Fences" and several in the group liked it. I can't adequately describe this product except to say that it offers a unique way to organize your desktop. With Fences, you can create categories that include only certain icons, making it easier to find whatever you might be looking for. You can also hide certain icons, leaving fewer choices when you

are picking the icon you want to work with. The Web site says "simplify your desktop by creating shaded areas which become movable and sizable containers for your icons. Double click blank spaces on your desktop and all your fences will fade out, or come back. You can create an unlimited number of fence areas on your desktop."

Fences can be found at <http://www.stardock.com/> and there are videos that describe what it does. "Fences" is free for home use. A Pro version is available for \$9.99 at this writing and the advantages of the Pro version are listed. I didn't pay much attention to Fences at first, but soon even the gurus started using it, so I'm passing it on to my readers. When even the consultants like a product, I think the rest of us should pay attention. There are certainly other ways to accomplish the task, but Fences may do it better. There are other products available there.

***Is That Web Site Safe To Visit?**

The above-mentioned users group has some interesting gurus who never fail to impress me at a monthly meeting or at a SIG meeting. At a monthly meeting, Mike Ungerman advised me that Reimage, the company I tried for improving the performance of my computer, had only a fair rating on "Web of Trust", but I had no idea what Web of Trust was. He advised me it would be a good idea to always use Web Of Trust when looking at products and services. It seems Web of Trust has a browser add-on you can download for Internet Explorer or Firefox that will give you a rating on the worthiness of many sites and their products when you access the URL.

You can also offer your own comment for a Web site or product on Web of Trust and it will be used in the rating. You might say their ratings are done by a jury of your peers. If you download and install their browser add-on, your browser will show a small circle with a color in it that rates the site you are visiting. The Web site is <http://www.mywot.com/>. There are a couple of sites nearly the same that are not good, so be sure you get that right.

I installed it and noticed that when I did a Google search for batteries, all of the URLs found had the WOT colored circles beside them. When I clicked on a URL with a red one, a window came up telling that the site did not have a very good reputation so I would enter at my own risk. Some URLs had the circle, but with a question mark, telling you it was not rated. I assume the rating depends on feedback about a site, but not necessarily for malicious code. It looks like Web Of Trust rates a site according to people's comments. Take a look and see what you think.

Hewie Poplock <http://www.hewie.net>, was answering a few of my questions on the use of Web of Trust and, during our conversation, he mentioned another URL of interest that will simply check the safety of a URL for you. That one is <http://browsingprotection.f-secure.com/swp/>, which comes from F-Secure, who most of you are familiar with. To check the quality of a certain URL, type it in to the box where indicated and click for it to rate your requested site.

You are probably familiar with McAfee's free Site Advisor <http://www.siteadvisor.com/>, and Link Scanner, free from AVG <http://linkscanner.explabs.com/linkscanner/avg/>, which I have previously written about to warn on the safety of a URL. The F-Secure product checks a URL free, but except for the 30-day trial versions of their products, the pricing is on their site. According to their Web site, their Internet Security offers many great features so if you don't mind the price, it may offer you peace of mind.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click [bobclick at bellsouth dot net](mailto:bobclick@bellsouth.net). Visit my Web site at <http://www.dealsguy.com>.

Mountain Computer User Group September 2010 Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Board Mtg Y H Library 10:00 am	9	10	11
12	13 Sept Mtg 6:00 Q&A 7:00	14	15	16 Deadline for September Newsletter Articles	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

BIRTHDAYS!

Don Monroe	09/08
Adam Carter	09/08
Juanita Schneider	09/08
Rea Williams	09/13
Michael Lazarz	09/18
Vivian Heath	09/22
John Scherer	09/25
Connie Lake	09/29
Diane Frenz	09/30

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Roger & Laura Hove	09/14/52	58 yrs
Bert & Lorraine Boutwell	09/25/49	59 yrs
Bob & Dot Vaughan	09/??/60	50 yrs
Gloria & John Gaskins	09/21/61	49 yrs
Tim & Adrienne Cassidy	09/20/64	46 yrs
Bill & Cathy Pearce	09/09/75	35 yrs
Tom & Jo Anne Allen	09/22/85	25 yrs
Arthur & Doris Mott	09/19/86	24 yrs
William & ? Scott	09/14/09	01 yrs