

Bits & Bytes

A Newsletter from the Gold Country Computer Learning Center

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Profile.....

Mitch Bain-The Learning Center's Doctor Digital

Mitch Bain does many of the most demanding and time-consuming jobs the Learning Center needs to have done and he does them with consummate skill. He is one of two senior technical advisors and is the chair of the technical support committee. As such he troubleshoots all kinds of technical problems; repairs computers; makes sure the network is always operating properly; evaluates, installs, and uninstalls software; and advises the Council on all of the many technical issues that arise. Mitch also conducts seminars, user group meetings and classes. Mitch Bain is indefatigable! I'll wager that 90 percent of those reading this newsletter have come into contact with Mitch in one way or the other.....and that you will agree with me.

"I was born in Los Angeles," Mitch said. "During the Depression, my family moved to New York City, where I went to grade school. Then we moved to Florida, where I went to junior high school and high school."

Mitch's father was a newspaperman and ran a radio station in Miami. During the war he was a war correspondent and ran all over the world covering war stories for a syndicated newspaper column and a nightly news program. "My mother," Mitch explained with obvious pride, "was the United States Women's Chess Champion."

"During World War II I turned seventeen and joined the navy," Mitch continued. "I trained for a year to learn how

to maintain radios, radars, and sonars. The navy called us 'radio technicians' and later 'electronic technicians.' I was at Treasure Island—in San Francisco—when the war ended.

Having not finished high school, Mitch enrolled at the University of Miami for a year and then took the entrance exam for Caltech.....and was accepted. He was lucky enough to have Nobel Prize winners, Richard Feynman and Linus Pauling for teachers. Mitch graduated with a degree in physics. (I cannot resist saying, as one who spent 13 years in management positions at Caltech; they only accept and graduate the best of the best. That tells me a lot about Mitch. Editor)

"Even though I got a physics degree, I always thought I was going to be an engineer. And as it turned out, that was a pretty wise thought. While I was in college the transistor was invented. Having a degree in physics, I knew how transistors operated and my first job was to design transistor circuits."



Mitch went to graduate school at UCLA and he learned logic design and how to design computers. Then he went to work for Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena and stayed about six years.



"I arrived at JPL the same day the first digital computer arrived. It had a room full of vacuum tubes and the inputs were by punched paper tape and punched cards. I ended up being in charge of the computer operations there."

When the Russians put up Sputnik, Eisenhower created NASA and JPL became one of the core operations for NASA. "Computers kept getting bigger and the whole computer operation kept getting bigger. And I kept learning more and more about computers and led developments in data acquisition and reduction."

"It soon became apparent that the people who were of some importance in computers were software people—I was not—I was a hardware guy." After JPL, Mitch went to a small company that specialized in computers and data acquisition.

"The next job change," Mitch continues, "was that I moved to the Bay Area to a company called Link that made flight simulators. There, I did more work for NASA and the space program. It was there that I designed a 24-bit minicomputer using integrated circuits."

But Mitch's major move was to Hewlett-Packard where he stayed for 16 years. "When I joined them, H-P was thinking about going into the computer business. The week I arrived, they moved their computer development operations to the division I had gone to work for." Mitch ended up in charge of the input-output group. He had the opportunity to use some of the first microprocessors that appeared on the market.

Then Mitch went to work as the hardware engineering manager for a start-up company that was in the local area network business. He managed the design of IBM's first local area network. There, he designed integrated circuits, hubs and switches and other networking hardware. "I had two objectives," Mitch explained. "I was going to get a lot of stock options and retire a millionaire. I got a heck of a lot of stock options but I did not retire a millionaire," Mitch finished with a laugh.

After that, Mitch went into business as a consultant, helping companies design ICs and local area network equipment. Then Mitch retired. Looking for challenges, he became a volunteer at NASA's Ames Research Center. He would lead tours, and lecture to visiting teachers, school kids, and various dignitaries about the wonders of the space program. The Center asked him to un-retire and come on board as an employee, so he had his second tour-of-duty with NASA, this time in the PR department.

"I finally retired again and moved to Grass Valley." Mitch has four daughters. His wife passed away nine

years ago. "My daughter in San Francisco thought I was going to move there. The one who lives in Philadelphia thought I should live there. And the one who lives near San Diego—in San Clemente—thought that would be a perfect place for me to live. But my daughter in Grass Valley won out and I have been here now for a number of happy years."

Philadelphia's, San Francisco's, and San Diego's loss is clearly our gain! Without Mitch, the Learning Center would not be the professional organization it is today!.

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Beware! The Grandparents' Guide To Internet Dangers

By Dick Mooney

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. — A federal grand jury on Tuesday indicted two men who prosecutors say used the Website MySpace.com to set up sexual encounters with underage Connecticut girls.

Since I'm pretty sure that some readers of this newsletter have teenage grandchildren, I thought this information might be useful.

The Internet can be a wonderful place for teenagers to browse. As you know, there are all kinds of great sites about entertainment, news, weather, games, and the kinds of reference material we used to have to go to the library to find. But the Internet can also be a dangerous place, especially for youngsters.

Teens pose a particular challenge when it comes to Internet safety. Teenagers are often adventuresome, knowledgeable about computers, and independent. But their lack of maturity, wariness, and life-experiences can make them easy targets for various Internet hazards.

There is certainly not room here for a comprehensive discussion of all these issues, but I will list some potential hazards, provide some suggestions about how to avoid them, and offer some hints about how you can obtain more complete information.

Pornography and identity theft are pretty self-explanatory so we don't need to dwell on those. You already know that the Internet is heavily populated with X-rated sites and you know that those places are not healthy places for your grandchildren to visit. You already know about identity theft—at least the basics—but there are different kinds of identity theft that endanger kids. Read on.



Lets talk about chat rooms, instant messaging and email, and social networking sites.

Chat Rooms - A chat room is an Internet site that allows a group of people to "enter" the room, type messages that are seen by everyone in the room, and "chat" back and forth. Chat rooms are usually organized around topics so that people with similar interests can chat with each other. Some chat rooms are moderated, meaning that there is a person leading the discussion; others are monitored so that people behaving inappropriately can be kicked out; and others are entirely open. The open ones can pose the worst problems.

Because no one knows your real name, or what you look like, some people say you can really be yourself in chat rooms. The problem is, people can also be someone completely different. Online friendships can become very strong without actually meeting the other person, which gives potential pedophiles an opportunity to form close relationships with children by posing as kids themselves. For this reason, chat is probably the most dangerous area of the Internet.

There are also private chat rooms. For example, a bad guy can establish a relationship with a young girl in a public chat room, and then suggest that they move to a private room where he can get really serious about finding out who and where she is.....in privacy. Needless to say, private chat rooms are poison.

For more on chat rooms, go to.....

<http://www.chatdanger.com/>

or Google, "chat room dangers."

Instant Messaging and Email - Instant messaging (IM) allows two people to hook up and have typed "conversations" in real time. With instant messaging, users maintain a list of contacts and can send messages to them when they are online.

Of course, we all know what email is.

IM and email are ways teens can carry on relationships with those who they have met in chat rooms or through information they have posted on a social networking site (more about his later). The point is, not all of these relationships are healthy.....and some can be downright dangerous.

Social Networking Sites - There are many social networking sites on the Internet where people can connect with their friends and make new ones as they share their interests and personalities through personal profiles, photos, comments, video, and audio they post. They can

be people looking for jobs, people who are interested in music or movies or hobbies, or people advertising goods or services. If you Google "social networking sites" you will find 39 million entries!

As with chat rooms, IM, and email, the vast majority of sites are quite above board. But it's the ones that are not we need to be worried about.

Lets take MySpace.com as an example. You may never have heard of MySpace.com, but it's a safe bet, your grandchildren have.

The statistics are staggering: 43 million users so far, 150,000 new ones every day. The vast majority of MySpace "pages" are legitimate. But there are those that are not.

Here's how your teenager can get into trouble. One is by telling too much about themselves. Too much information is a treasure trove for pedophiles. It is not uncommon for underage minors to obtain membership despite the site's minimum age restriction of 14 years old. Given the relative social inexperience and trusting nature of young users, it can be expected that many can become the primary targets of child predators and other bad actors.

Another problem is that many of other people's "pages" contain very raunchy material and images—neither of which teens should be exposed to.

Finally - Another danger of the Internet for youngsters is that it's just plain seductive. The urge to "surf" is just too strong for many youngsters to resist. As Time Magazine (March 27, 2006) put it, "It's the sheer amount of screen-sucking time [it consumes] in lives that are already overscheduled." School work suffers. Social skills development suffers. Family relationships are strained. Well, you get the point.

Danger signals are:

- Spending long hours online (especially in the evening)
- Phone calls from people you don't know
- Unsolicited gifts arriving via the mail
- Child turns off the computer when you enter the room
- Child withdraws from family activities
- Reluctance to discuss Internet activities

What Can Be Done? - *Supervision* is the key.

Do not let youngsters use the computer in privacy. Locate the computer, not in the teen's room, but in a public space. Limit computer use to times when adults are present. Monitor the time spent on the Internet.



Make sure that your teen never reveals any information which could help determine their real identity. This includes name, mailing address, email address, phone number, and photos. Kids tend to think that their Internet activities are private as long as their parents are not watching. Wrong!

Never allow the teen to meet someone who they found online, either in a private chat room or IM, or especially in person, without consulting with a parent.

Never allow the teen to respond to any instant message, email, or chat messages which make you, or them, feel uncomfortable.

Choose an Internet name for the teen, which is gender neutral and not likely to attract unwanted sexual attention.

Remember that people on the Internet are not always who they claim to be.

Train your teen to always consult with you if anything makes them uncomfortable on the Internet.

Limit the time your youngster spends on the Internet. Instead, hang out with them. Play games. Wash the car. See movies together. If all else fails, enforce a daily time limit for non-school related computer activities.

Block inappropriate content. Site filtering software is one way to prevent teenagers from reaching inappropriate web content. This type of software attempts to block out objectionable web sites using a variety methods. Again, there are many of these. You can Google "site filtering software" and find a bunch. Two of the programs rated best by Consumer Reports in 2001 were Cyber Patrol by Surf Control Inc. and Cybersitter 2000 by Solid Oak Software Inc.

The number of teens who are molested, abducted, or leave home as a result of contacts made on the Internet are relatively low, but when it happens the results can be tragic. Don't let it happen to your teen!

To learn more, Google "Internet danger teenagers"

And, here are good information sites:

http://www.methuen.k12.ma.us/cgs/teenagers_and_internet_safety.htm

<http://www.wiredsafety.org/safety/index.html>

<http://www.myspace.com/misc/safetytips.html>

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Tech Tips

Submitted by: Doug Worthy

Use That Backspace Key!

Quite often when searching the web, computer users will use the mouse to click on the back button (green arrow), not realizing that the backspace key on the keyboard will perform the same function. Try it.

Another useful tip to avoid RPS (Repetitive Motion Strain) is to use different fingers when clicking the mouse button. Surprisingly, a person can become very proficient using a different finger. Frequent computer users can also benefit by switching their mouse pad to the opposite side from where they normally have it placed. You might be surprised how quickly you can adjust to this.

More Tips.....

Would you like to make a trademark symbol, or a tilde, or an umlaut? Here is a page that will tell you how to create these symbols, plus many more using the ALT key.

<http://www.tedmontgomery.com/tutorial/ALTchrc.html>

If you would rather use the keyboard to open the Start menu, press the Windows logo key (WinKey) located on the bottom row of your keyboard. Once it's open, use the arrow keys and then press Enter on the highlighted command.

Here is a Website showing more uses for the WinKey. (You can also move forward and back to the other pages if you would like to see more hints.)

http://www.activewin.com/tips/desk_tips_10.shtml

Many PC users have new drives that allow them to burn DVDs. DVDs will hold 4.7 gigabytes (that's 4700 megabytes!), versus CDs, which only hold 700 megabytes. (To be completely accurate, due to formatting and other stuff that has to be included on the disk, a DVD will only hold about around 4.4 GB of actual data.) If you want to know more about DVD's, this site will tell you all you ever wanted to know.

<http://www.dvddemystified.com/dvdfaq.html#1.1>

Also, this is a good site from Roxio, maker of disk burning software.

http://www.roxio.com/en/interest/articles/product/choosing_media.jhtml?sssdmh=dm15.76748

**Have a favorite tip?
Email it to the editor at
publicity1@gclcl.org**





Photo of the Month

This is a photo of the Deschutes River, at Bend Oregon—in beautiful autumn colors. This was taken from outside our hotel window. The city of Bend is very pretty, with a wonderfully restored old town—right in the middle of the rather bleak wilderness which is central Oregon. Thanks to Roger Thornburn for this beautiful photo!

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Humor.....

Dear Tech Support

Last year I upgraded from Girlfriend 7.0 to Wife 1.0. I soon noticed that the new program began unexpected child processing that took up a lot of space and valuable resources. In addition, Wife 1.0 installed itself into all other programs and now monitors all other system activity. Applications such as Poker Night 10.3, Football 5.0, Hunting and Fishing 7.5, and Racing 3.6. I can't seem to keep Wife 1.0 in the background while attempting to run my favorite applications. I'm thinking about going back to Girlfriend 7.0 but the uninstall doesn't work on Wife 1.0 . Please help!

Thanks, Troubled User.....

Reply

Dear Troubled User:

This is a very common problem that men complain about. Many people upgrade from Girlfriend 7.0 to Wife 1.0, thinking that it is just a Utilities and Entertainment program. To the contrary, Wife 1.0 is an Operating System and is designed by its Creator to run everything!!! It is also impossible to delete Wife 1.0 and to return to Girlfriend 7.0. It is impossible to uninstall, or purge the program files from the system once installed.

You cannot go back to Girlfriend 7.0 because Wife 1.0 is designed not to allow this. Look in your Wife 1.0 manual under "Warnings-Alimony/Child Support." I recommend that you keep Wife 1.0 and work on improving the situation. I suggest installing the background application, "Yes Dear," to alleviate software augmentation. The best course of action is to enter the command C:\APOLOGIZE! because ultimately you will have to give the APOLOGIZE command before the system will return to normal anyway. Wife 1.0 is a great program, but it tends to be very high maintenance. Wife 1.0 comes with several support programs, such as Clean and Sweep 3.0, Cook It 1.5, and Do Bills 4.2.

However, be very careful how you use these programs. Improper use will cause the system to launch the program Nag Nag 9.5. Once this happens, the only way to improve the performance of Wife 1.0 is to purchase additional software. I recommend Flowers 2.1 and Diamonds 5.0! WARNING!!! DO NOT, under any circumstances, install Secretary With Short Skirt 3.3. This application is not supported by Wife 1.0 and will cause irreversible damage to the operating system!

Best of luck, Tech Support

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April Events

April User Group meeting.....

Thursday, April 20 (9:00 – 11:00)

"The Control Panel and You"

Presented by Howard Klein

Howard will show you how to customize the display, mouse, and keyboard; add and remove hardware and software; schedule tasks for computer security; use power saving options; and understand user privileges and the Device Manager.

Plus... we will have our techies aboard to answer your general computer-related questions and concerns. We welcome your ideas as well.

User Group meetings are open to everyone. There is no fee, but there is a suggested donation of \$1.

April Seminar.....

Wednesday, April 26 (1:00 - 4:00)

"Hard Drive Skills"

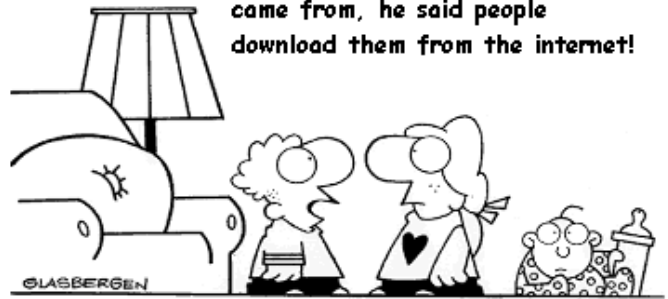
Presented by Mitch Bain and Roger Thornburn

Mitch and Roger will show you how to install a Hard Drive. You will learn how to partition it and protect your data against viruses and other disasters by backing up to your newly installed hard drive. With the ever-changing E-world comes more and more exposure to potential problems. Protection is the name of the game.

Seminar fees are \$10, single and \$15, double. (\$5 for GCCLC volunteers.)

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I asked my dad where the children came from, he said people download them from the internet!



General Information and Contacts

Website – www.gcclc.org

Phone number for general information - 273-0497

For seminar and user group information and sign-up:

**Call Joan at 273-6955 or,
Email seminar1@goldcountrycenter.org
The Community Center at 273-4961 can also sign-up you up for seminars.**

For course registration:

**Call Carol at 273-3029 or,
Email admin1@goldcountrycenter.org
You can also register online at our Website.**

For volunteer information:

**Call Karen at 470-0270 or,
Email ed2@goldcountrycenter.org
You can also volunteer online at our Website.**

**For free computer labs, sign up online at
www.gcclc.org/cgi-bin/labcal.pl**

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