



The

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Apple Blossom Computer Club  
A registered Apple/Macintosh User Group

Dec. '09

still only

\$2.00

### Next Meeting

**Dec. 17, 7 PM**  
**American Legion Hall**  
**406 SE Oak Ave**

### Agenda

1. Meeting starts at 7 P.M.
2. Intro's of members and guests
3. Old business
4. New biz
5. Program: Drawing for your very own copy of **Voilà!** You must be there.
6. Questions & (maybe)Answers

### Adobe Product

by **Jim McClellan**

[<mcclellan@charter.net>](mailto:mcclellan@charter.net)

#### UPDATE

Last month I wrote about problems I had with Adobe. One of the problems is still unresolved. That is getting the \$99.99 removed from my credit card bill. I check this several times a week. Yep, I'm still not a happy camper!

Now I'm having another problem, this time with my Brother MFC 6890CDW multifunction printer. It worked fine from late April to about a week or two ago. I can still receive a fax or copy a color photo, but I can't now scan or use the printer function.

A few days ago I tried to use the toll free phone tech support, but a machine said that number was no longer valid. It gave me a new number that had a message saying it would cost **2 -->**

### Macintosh Quotes

collected by **Dave Archer** <dave@davearcher.com>

"The (Windows) system is so complicated...that it has become unusable... even by geeks like me. (My system crash has been) a nightmare in which even the experts couldn't solve my problems, leaving me at the mercy of an impenetrable and unpredictable system."

Others words used by Mr. Alsop included "unmanageable" and "ghastly"

(Stewart Alsop, longtime PC column author and Wintel supporter.)

"Windows has become a bloated, unwieldy product only experts can use without confusion, crashes and endless compatibility problems."

(Windows magazine Editor-in-Chief Mike Elgan's "Open Letter to Bill Gates" May 1998)

"We often have little choice but to put up with shoddiness in PC products. Who in their right mind would tolerate these sorts of problems with cars, TVs, or telephones?"

(Cathryn Baskin, Editor-in-Chief of PC World magazine, March 1998)

Remember, folks, these are quotes from leaders of the PC press. Hmmm... how about the multi-millionaire CEOs of Windows products?

"Intel chairman Andy Grove, co-developer of the 'Wintel' PC, has seen the future of computing and it is a Macintosh."

("Andy Grove Loves His iMac.",

TIME Daily, 23 Sept 1998)

"Because there is such a gap between (using) the PC and the Mac platforms, converts come across as having a messianic quality. It's like having a pain suddenly disappear. You're so happy the pain's gone you want everyone to be as happy as you are."

(Ryan Lanctot, in a response to the Alsop article above)

"Market acceptance non-withstanding, Windows is far, far behind the Macintosh."

(Computer Reseller News)

"I wonder if in part why so many people are angry at Microsoft is not just because their products frustrate them so much, but also because this frustration is ignored. The computer makes people feel like they are dummies, when in fact it is the computer that is stupid."

(Rosalind Picard, Associate Professor of Media Technology at MIT, April 1998)

"If switching to a single OS saves money, how come no IS manager that went all-Windows has EVER asked for a cut in budget and/or staff?"

"(People ask me) 'There are many PCs that are less expensive than a Mac.

Isn't it smarter to buy the cheaper one?' You know, that same argument was used to sell a lot of Yugos and Hyundais in the 1980s, but nobody was calling for the death of **2 -->**

The **Apple Blossom Computer Club** (ABCC) is an Apple Computer Inc., registered Macintosh and Apple ][ family user group. The ABCC publishes *The RoseByter* newsletter monthly which is posted to each paid up member and reciprocating user groups. ABCC participates in user group newsletter content exchange. The ABCC also maintains a WWW site at:

<http://www.abccmug.org>

## Membership

Just \$20/year! Send with your name, snail- & e-mail address & phone to:  
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## <-1 12 Expert Google Search Tips

Mercedes-Benz.”

“There might be less software on the Mac side of the aisle, but a lot of what’s produced for Windows isn’t all that good. Crap does not survive in the Mac market.”

(James Staten, an analyst with Dataquest)

“Every time you get a dialog box you don’t understand, you ought to get a nickel from Microsoft, and every time it crashes, you should get a dollar. That would make Bill Gates homeless and me a rich man.”

(Ben Shneiderman, University of Maryland computer science professor)

“PC users brag about what the media has said about their computers; Mac users brag about what they’ve done with their computers.”

(Neal Porter)

“I wrote an ad for Apple Computer: ‘Macintosh - We might not get everything right, but at least we knew the century was going to end.’”

(Author Douglas Adams, on the Y2K problem)

“The Macintosh may only have 10% of the market, but it is clearly the top 10%.”

## <-1 Adobe Product

me for the call. I then found their tech support web site and managed to send an email message. No answer within the 24 hour time line on the web site. So I waited a couple of more days and sent another email today with a bit more information. It will be interesting to see if I get a reply and even more interesting if I get help and the machine works like it should!

Before Thanksgiving the Panasonic VCR I bought a couple of years ago would let me record TV programs again. A week before the problem occurred, I could only tape Fox News. While I really like Fox News, I really wanted to tape some CBS, NBC,

(Douglas Adams)

“Microsoft announced today that the official release date for the new operating system Windows 2000 will be delayed until the second quarter of 1901.”

“With two young children, I told them it was important to buy a computer the kids would be comfortable with, could learn from, and could use easily with no hassles involved (Can you say ‘Mac’?). I also told them that while PCs were good machines, their problem lies in the fact that they are difficult and confusing, aren’t easy to set up, aren’t geared toward new users, and weren’t very cost effective over the life of the computer.”

Being a Mac user is like being a Navy SEAL: a small, elite group of people with access to the most sophisticated technology in the world, who everyone calls on to get the really tough jobs done quickly and efficiently.

“Don’t worry about the Apple Macintosh computer; I understand the Pilgrims’ world market share was about 8% in the beginning, too.”

(David Pogue)

“I have yet to witness an inci-

# 2

8 -->

ABC, etc. shows. Rather than call the Panasonic help number, I tried to fix it myself. After a couple of days, of trying a various times of the day, I was not even able to tape Fox News! Yeah, I’ve never claimed to be smart with things electric. I did spend a few more days using my usual “try and error” technique. Again without any success!

I finally called Panasonic Tech Support and after about three minutes of listening to the guy on the other end of the phone, my problem was solved! Yeah Panasonic!

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Jim



# Passwords On The Fly 3

by Walt Pawley <walt@wump.org>

Passwords are one of those vexing things that quite simply have to be dealt with in some way. That necessity causes all sorts of trouble ... and not necessarily because of anything the user does wrong. The purpose of this article is to offer a method for dealing with “remembering” too many passwords without the use of programs, etc., which one might not have with them when they are at the library or visiting a friend, say. It’s not foolproof but it can be a big help.

This method requires remembering a little and doing some mental “calculations,” though not usually of the arithmetic sort, when a password is needed. First, there’s the need to have a base code that is used to form passwords and, second, the algorithm used to compute the password from the base code must be committed to memory. Fortunately, these things can both be pretty simple and should be easy to remember if not necessarily so easy to create.

Here are some notions that you need to consider in forming a base code:

1. Passwords should consist of many characters so that they are difficult to happen upon by brute force trial and error.
2. Passwords should be concise because some places limit the number of characters one can use.
3. Passwords should contain letters and digits.
4. Passwords should contain only letters ... again because some places limit the sort of characters one can use. Ditto digits only.
5. Passwords should be something not readily guessed by association with their user.

Great. Items 1 & 2 are diametrically

opposed; likewise 3 & 4. And 4 can be problematic all on its own. To solve these problems, one needs to use a computational algorithm that can deal with these issues, as well a base code that lends itself to such malleability. Seems like a pretty tall order. In general, it is and this method may or may not work for every place one haunts, so don’t be upset when your approach doesn’t fit some place’s requirements. It will just have to be dealt with independently.

The first thing you need is a word or two or three that you simply will not forget. This should be something ingrained in your consciousness. Oddly, I have a 13 character non-word that may well be the last set of characters that waft though my consciousness on my death bed that no one else knows – it’s an utter nonsense sequence. I use parts of it from time to time. I also use other things to compose base codes that I use; not many, but a few. One thing we’re unlikely to forget is our own name (though I’ve had spells when I blanked on mine). There are admonitions aplenty against using such things ... and they are valid, so you may want to use something else. But for the purposes of illustration, I’m going to create a base code from the name **Jim McClellan**.

By examination, I like **lellimmcc**.

**J**im **M**cc**l**e**l**l**a**n  
**l**e**l**l**i**m**m**c**c**

Why? It’s nine characters. This is usually enough to get by the “long” requirements and can be decreased by

dropping letter pairs to just five if necessary.

It can be pronounced as a “word” ... sort of “lel-i-mik,” say. Why is that important? Sometimes it’s easier for people to remember the sound of the word than the spelling. Since we created this “word” by shuffling hunks of **Jim McClellan**, chances are good that if we can’t remember the spelling, we can recreate the spelling from the way the “word” sounds.

If you need digits in the password, you could convert the **11** to **11** to yield **le11immcc**. Note that I didn’t convert the leading “l” to the digit “1.” The reason for this is that it’s almost always best to start such things with a letter. Alternatively, and perhaps more obscurely and more difficult, convert the vowels to digits like **12113mmc** by noting that “e” is the second vowel in the alphabet and “i” is the third. These are just two of the essentially infinite variety of possible ways to do this sort of thing. I suggest keeping it simple – it’s something that has to be remembered.

Now, it’s generally not a good idea to use the same password for everything. I know a number of people who do just that because they can’t remember unique passwords for all the things that need them. I can’t remember them either, which is why I use the sort of method I’m describing in this article. The “trick” is to convert the base code into a password, again using some simple calculation. The calculation should meld something unique-ish about the place you’re creating it for with your base code.

Let’s suppose you have an email account at Yahoo. One way you could compute the password is to insert **yah** into **lellimmcc** some

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Any trace of organization in these paragraphs is entirely coincidental

4



## Working TV Executives

This evening there are numerous programs on the boob tube about “the end of time” that’s due in 2012. All I can say is that if you wish to promote a point of view, you can find some set of people who’ll swear they know exactly that point of view is going to come to fruition, or is the way things once were or, even, the way things are right now, despite all the evidence to the contrary. But, you know, the producers of some of this tripe should run it by some real physicists before they stick it on the air ... well, **assuming they don’t care to come off as horses’ patoots**, that is. One supposedly learned commentator made the statement that he knew of no physicist working on hyperdimensional theories of reality. Perhaps his credentials are from Head-In-The-Sand Strict Creationist University of Murika. Certainly I can’t refute his statement: I have no idea what he knows or doesn’t know. Well, that’s not strictly true. I know he doesn’t know anything about what theories physicists work on or with, if he’s not simply lying. Just in case you’re not aware of it, the mainstream modern working theory about where we exist is known as Space-Time and is considered hyperdimensional. But Space-Time is sort of old hat. Real quiche eating physicists muck about with hyperdimensional theories like chemists play with test tubes. Obviously, we are considered to be the boob part of the tubes. Science reality has a way of outdo-

ing science fiction. I’m not at all convinced that the typical story of the megalomaniacal management of the head-in-the-clouds scientists doing esoteric something, running off with and misusing the something are all that farfetched. I recently read about a NASA project that’s developing **a multichannel neural probe that can be implanted inside the brain** and communicate with equipment outside the person via radio. It’s being developed for research into how the brain works. The idea is to put the probe in place and watch how neurons behave when the person is stimulated in some way. By having the probe completely closed inside the subjects, there’re no pathways for pathogens to infect them. We should learn a great deal about how we work by using these probes and subsequent versions. Indeed, the more we learn about how the brain works, the easier it will be to inject signals (that part is easy now) that have meaning (that’s less clear ... so far) directly into the brain. Another way to put that is that real mind control is just around the corner. Your brain “chip” would connect with the cell phone network, where it would relay data back and forth between your monitoring (and controlling) computer.

I’ve written about “my typical myopia” a number of times on these pages. **True to form, I’ve been wrong every time.** It seems that myopia is “nearsightedness,” with the clear meaning that one can see things that are close well. That is NOT the affliction of my eyes. The “-opia” to describe my eyes is correctly typical, but not “my-”: rather it’s presbyopia. I’ve heard the term “presbyopia” many times and never bothered to find out what it meant. It is essentially the general term for the diminishing ability of focus the eye as one ages, so I guess it could include myopia. My eyes tend

to hyperopia or farsightedness. Live and learn. I’ll try to be as consistent at getting it right in the future as I was in getting wrong in the past.

It seems the IEEE has finally gotten around to ratifying an 802.11n standard for radio based “ethernet.” In other words, **the WiFi products that have been selling for a few years now, have a real standard to live up to.** This is most probably a good thing because the pre-release products that supposedly comply with 802.11n’s protocols are not necessarily all compatible with one another the way they should be. I suppose a couple caveats are in order. First, try to buy “real” 802.11n goodies now - ones that claim to be compatible with the ratified standard. For some time to come, there will be inventories of pre-release stuff that’s not compliant but will likely be touted as “compatible.” Second, if you want to move up to the wireless speeds that 802.11n can provide, it’s important to avoid putting 802.11n non-compliant equipment on the same network, despite the fact that they should work. The problem is that this sort of equipment can slow the whole network down.

I guess it had to come. **T-Mobile was planning to charge \$1.50 to bill their customers** ... if they wanted the bill on paper. Apparently the politics of such a move frightened them out of actually doing it. Probably a good thing. I’ve long been troubled by the price of postage. Once upon a time, snail mail was something affordable. Then the big business approach to doing things was applied to the USPS and prices have been escalating ever since. I guess it’s understandable why companies would want to charge for using more than electrons and magnetic fields to get paid these days. On the other hand, they could have made themselves heros

5 -->

## <--Water Blogged Wump

by offering a \$1.50/month discount to customers electing to provide payment for an emailed bill. Indeed, they could have offered a \$5/month discount for automatic electronic payment resulting in an emailed statement.

How about this: **There's nothing like an official letter from the U.S. Department of Commerce's munitions control office to make you choke on your morning coffee. ... we were (and still are) exporting "Dr. Dobb's Essential Books of Cryptography and Security" CDROM which provides the full text of articles and books — as well as source code — about encryption algorithms and protocols. We'd been exporting "munitions" without a license ... . The solution was simple: I filled out some paperwork, wrote a \$250 check, and Dr. Dobb's became a legally sanctioned munitions exporter.** Typical. **If you're doing something that considered nearly treasonous, the problem is that you don't have a license.** I'd like to have concluded that last sentence with a question mark, but that would have been ingenious of me.

I just finished reading an opinion piece about the status of the information technology industry and how jobs in the U.S. are vanishing. The crux of the piece was that it was a phenomena not unique to IT and was affecting other industries as well ... like that of the writer — the news business. As one might well expect, the concept of "the market" was present. Unlike a lot of, and perhaps most of, Americans, I'm not a fan of the notion that so-called free markets are the answer to every problem that befalls us. It's not that I have any surefire alternative to regale you with. I'm rather of the opinion that such things don't really exist unless you take the Ayn Rand approach and hypothesize that all problems are solved thus. Would that I was so certain of my beliefs! Anyway, I digress as usual. If there's

an epiphany to my thinking about "the market," it was on the supply side of the supply/demand interplay. As you're most probably aware, the basic idea is that when something is scarce relative to the demand for it, the price is high and vice versa. Real scarcity is when the supply is zero. On the other hand, if something is non-existent, it may also be that there's no demand for it whatever. Yet another notion wafted through my head. What if the supply is zero simply because no one has thought of it. Does that mean it's impossible? Or, infeasible? Or, does it mean that demand fell so much that the company making it went out of business and there's no one else to do it, not even a little for a high price? Or, maybe it means that no one is willing to pay that high price? Or was it simply "improved" away? **The dynamics of a "free market" almost always drive most alternatives to their graves.** It's part of the "tyranny of democracy" we accept for living relatively peacefully amongst one another.

Graphene is a form of pure carbon in which the atoms form a mono-atomic plane. **It's a sort of extremely thin diamond.** One of the curious properties of graphene is that it has about 100 times the conductivity of pure copper. At least, that's true of graphene on a nanometer scale. Because of the this, it's being proposed as the interconnection material for devices in integrated circuits (ie. chips). There's apparently some question of how graphene would behave at a macroscopic scale. But consider what a boon it would be if main power distribution cables were made of it. We'd be able to send electricity long distances with very little loss. This would make practical using much higher currents and, therefore, correspondingly much lower voltages than is presently the case. This could greatly improve the safety of electrical distribution. Perhaps one of the biggest benefits would be in local distribution. The poles could

carry low enough voltages so that inexpensive components could be used to bring the power from the poles to buildings. Put another way, large iron and copper laden transformers would be replaced by high efficiency converter electronics. Even the electronics would benefit from graphene wiring. Not just in the chips, but even in the little transformers used. Medicine could be another big beneficiary of graphene conductors — MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) uses very high magnetic fields, the limit for which is how hot the wires get when the magnets are turned on. Stronger magnetic fields mean better pictures and less trouble with claustrophobia. One might even see the way to make a hand held MRI which could be tuned for different molecules, ie. a tri-corder.

The Pacific Northwest may not be the best place for solar voltaic panels to generate power, but we do have one source in comparative abundance. The source? Tree power. Yeah, I immediately thought that burning trees on a wholesale basis wasn't really all that great an idea. Well, that ain't it. Tree power is something one gets from live trees. It turns out that if you drive two nails at different elevations into a tree and measure the voltage between them, there is a useable potential there. Before you run out with a bag of 16 penny nails, a two pound hammer and an extension ladder, it should be pointed out that the amount of power available this way is not really all that great. At this time, it's unknown what the effect on the tree is of continually extracting some level of power from it is. Time will probably tell. **Kind of makes me wonder how hard it would be to cross electric eels with earthworms.** A side benefit of the electric earthworm would be bait that wouldn't let the fish off the hook.

Some years ago, not long after Apple produced it's first Power PC G5 computers, what was touted

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for a short time as the world's fastest supercomputer was made out of them – a lot of them. They took good advantage of gigabit ethernet networking. Since then, a number of such supercomputers have been made, some seemingly just for the purpose of touting their x-flops in the press.

### A “flop” is a “floating point operation.”

For those of you without a background in the nature of computer arithmetic, you can think of a “flop” as an operation on numbers in something akin to scientific notation, ie. the distance from Earth to the Sun is about 93,000,000 miles or  $9.3 \times 10^{*7}$  miles times  $5.28 \times 10^{*3}$  feet/mile equals  $4.9104 \times 10^{*11}$  feet. Floating point arithmetic is logically a good deal more complex than the original truncated integer arithmetic, or “fixed point” arithmetic, computers were originally designed for. Floating point was created to simplify working with much wider ranges of values than fixed point operations could handle. Such values routinely arise in dealing with the equations of physical systems. One of the things that also arises with solving such problems is literally trillions of complex equations to solve and re-solve millions of times to obtain just one solution. Clearly even a computer that can do billions of flops per second won't cough up a solution anyone can wait around for (rather reminiscent of Deep Thought's 7,000,000 year computation of the number 42). To solve that problem, one uses a lot of computers all working in parallel. Using 10,000 of the world's fastest processors is becoming common at universities involved in computational science. Unlike the G5 networking, they tend to be networked with 40 Gbs InfiniBand fiber channel cards. It seems to me that increasing that number to 100,000 or so is mostly a matter of someone providing a little funding. It might only take a few tens of millions of dollars.

Are you ready for “cloud computing?”

It seems to be one of the industry hot buttons these days ... whatever it actually is. I've been reading about cloud computing for a long time. Back in them good ol' days, it was primarily about solving problems that are too big for solving on personal computers, or even mainframe computers, any time real soon now. To do that, the problem was broken up into pieces that could be handled reasonably by such machines and doled out to them over a network, usually the Internet. A well known example is SETI – the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence – or, as it's known by unenthusiasts, the hunt for LGM (Little Green Men). In such context, cloud computing doesn't seem very threatening, but change the venue a bit and there are concerns that lurk in the back of the mind. And that's just what's happening right now. **Cloud computing is being touted as the next big thing for business computing.** It's supposed to reduce cost and improve reliability. There are a number of cloud computing models competing for attention. For example, major Internet players are producing suites of software that you use via the Web and pay for the time that you use it. You don't need mass storage – the cloud provides it. That alone worries me. As a business, do you really want your data kept by who knows whom? Consider: with outsourcing, the Chinese management company that's in charge will really employ a Somalian contractor to keep the servers running under a name like All American Cloud Computing Services, LLC. Besides the security of one's data, there are things like being stuck with whatever capability “the cloud” cares to provide. I find it nice to be able to do things with data not pre-programmed into some “business” software. No matter. The politicos have decided that cloud computing is something government can use to “save money.” Riiiiight ...

Want an invisibility cloak? Well, they may well be right around the corner.

It's long been hypothesized that one way to make something “invisible” is to point a camera **6** from the object at its back-ground and then project this picture on object's front side. Not too hard to do, sort of, if the object is something you can hide behind a monitor. But **an actual throw-it-around-your-shoulders cloak is another matter entirely ... or, at least, it was.** Recently a flexible LED display has been created that one could indeed make a cloak out of. One might expect this to be some sort of large scale printed OLED (Organic LED) thing but it's not like that at all. Instead, the LEDs are more or less of a classical nature, connected via a mesh of cabling. Each LED is at a crossing of the mesh. The whole mess is bonded to a flexible substrate, ie. a rubber sheet. What makes it work is the fact the cabling from one LED to the next has a hump in it that rises off the substrate. The humps act as flexible members providing for some amount of stretching and compressing of the mesh.

PBS is currently airing a news piece about recess in school. One thing struck me immediately. Teachers did not participate, ie. they turned the kids loose and hid. So, guess what? Yeah, recess is a mess. Big surprise. So what to do? Well clearly the way to deal with this is to have a special set of people who do recess. In this case, it's called Sports4Kids. It turns out that a lot big whigs who supposedly know all there is to know about “good” education practices think the right thing to do is dispense with recess and use that time to keep kids in classes longer.

**What the bloody hell is wrong with us?** When did it become acceptable for a school to simply turn kids out into a playground and ignore them? I'm sorry but I have little sympathy for teachers if they believe their job is so specialized they have **7 -->** no responsibility for this. If it's coming from the principal, perhaps

## <--Water Blogged Wump

they should be lynching the idiot or, at least, embellishing the principal's wardrobe with an outfit of tar and feathers. My goodness! We have a horrible obesity problem and our best recommendation is to make sure those fat, flatulent butts stay on their seats as much as possible? Besides, where's the evidence that keeping kids in front of books and harping at them longer does anything to help them learn?

### **My Internet gateway computer was recently attacked in what I can only characterize as some sort of "botnet" based assault.**

Attacks on gateway systems are not at all uncommon. They generally are from a single computer "out there somewhere" that rapidly pumps trials of login codes that are apparently derived from some list of likely login code candidate values. I suspect that these sorts of attacks are the result of some virus taking control of a computer or, perhaps more likely, some misguided person running a "cracker" program on their computer. But this latest attack was quite different. It seemed to consist of two attempts from each computer, most of which were located in Turkey. After each computer tried to get in, there'd be a highly varied time interval before the next computer would try it. This went on for nearly a whole day and then inexplicably stopped. I'd like to believe that the stopping had something to do with a note that I sent to the Turkish network's abuse email address. I did provide them with my log data which identified the computers involved. But I doubt they even looked into it. It's more likely that the cracking technique just petered out or determined that my gateway was not penetrable by the technique employed. This is the first time I've seen a "stealth" attack on my gateway. One thing remains a puzzle – why choose

**7** to attack my gateway at all? It's not like it's advertised or linked to anywhere of which I'm

aware. The services I have enabled on it are only for private use anyway and consist of a whole lot of nothing of much interest to almost anyone I'm not working directly with at the time. This got me to thinking that I'd not looked at the Apache logs in quite a long time. My gateway's web site is, for anyone without some extra clues, just a default Apache install. This means that my logs are just chocked full of efforts to compromise Windows based web site software that, of course, failed miserably. As I looked through the mess, I happened on one attack that seemed to be dumping some sort of binary program at the web server. Perhaps that's meaningful at some sites but it seems very peculiar to me. It went on for two days. There was what I'd guess were attempts at the "buffer overflow" crack that's supposed to be so successful. They didn't work either. I'm tempted to craft a scary looking error return page ... just to have a little fun. You know, something like a JavaScripted progress bar with the text underneath saying something like, "Deleting files. Please wait ..." as the bar advances across the screen. And if I can read file names, I'd have them flashing by underneath that. Have to look into this ...

At <http://www.pddnet.com/video-oled-technology-roll-it-up-111209/> you can see the RollTop Laptop. I suspect it's not really available but it does have its charm. I'm still looking for the pocketable general purpose computer, display and communications device that doesn't require old eyes to use a magnifying glass to read.

The unmitigated arrogance of big businesses in this country and, perhaps, elsewhere in the world, is probably accelerating the demise of many people. I have an Internet connection via Charter cable. The basic behavior of the cable itself is very good. However **what they refer to as "support" is either a well thought out system planned to frus-**

**trate the customer to the point of cardiac collapse** so they'll quit trying to get their problems fixed or the cabal of marketing types have successfully expressed their clueless contempt for customers. The examples are seemingly endless. Charter has a local office. You can't call it or email it. About all you can do is show up in person and spend money. Help is not available there. This evening I ran afoul of some incredibly badly configured automaton with the express purpose of stopping me from sending spam emails. What did it stop with? I sent one message to one person with an attachment for an HTML 404 error response page. I have no idea what the criteria used to thwart this email is. There's nothing whatever about the email that's spam-like by any criteria that I can think of. Perhaps they'll let me know in the 48-hours they claim it takes to "consider." Oh! That's right. They can't respond to requests to unblock an email. Having this email blocked, I attempted to send another message to the intended recipient to tell them it would be a while before I could send the original message. Whoops! That was blocked too. Indeed, subsequent testing seemed to point out that I could no longer send any email through Charter. How clever of them, especially since the most innocuous of simple messages to a single recipient (even me) is individually being proclaimed to be spam. You can "contact" Charter support on-line ... theoretically. But they don't take email (I think you can send it but it's seems to be disposed of in their Swirling Puff of Electrons Data Eradication System - SPEDES). You can "ask a question" ... which is just a search engine pick of some useless FAQ on their web site. Or you can chat with a representative on-line. Click the link, fill in the form and up comes a page telling you that it's not available now – try again between 9 am and 3 pm. Of course, they could have put that data by the link to the chat so you would be able to avoid uselessly filling in all **8 -->**

Yahoo



lellyahimmcc

way. Examples: **lellyahimmcc**, **yahle11immcc** or **l2113mmccyah**. It's not always so easy to figure out what characters to stick into the base code, usually because a web site has a lot of generic verbiage in its name. But that sort of thing is usually OK, as long as the site doesn't impose too small a number of allowed trials to get it right – which some do: like Apple, for example. The key here is to try to be as consistent in your methodology

Yahoo



yahle11immcc

as possible so you can hit the right password in just a few tries; preferentially just one.

Of course, keeping your base code and your calculation algorithms to yourself is also key. Be creative but also use basic data that you won't forget that is also unlikely to be guessed by someone who knows you.

To recap:

1. Choose some set of characters

Yahoo



l2113mmccyah

you're certain to remember.

2. Form a base code by picking out some parts of that set and shuffling them together in manner you can recall.
3. Form a password by mixing in some part of the name of the place requiring it with your base code, again in a manner you can recall.
4. Keep what you've done to yourself.



### <--Water Blogged Wump

the crap they want in the first place. Speaking of said crap, I did manage to reach something that typed back at me uselessly through a chat window on another occasion. In the middle of that chat, the representative wanted all that data again and some other stuff "for verification." What they need "verification" for is beyond me. I wasn't interested in anything that was even slightly proprietary or sensitive in any way I could imagine. Again, I suspect it's just a roadblock to get rid of a customer with an annoying legitimate concern. Basically, Charter's web site is the data equivalent of a black hole from the point of view of getting any real help. I sure hope my email is cleared up before I have to send the proof of this newsletter in for publication. PS: in all fairness, later attempts to reach someone via on-line chat resulted in getting my email running again. However, the advice given on how to deal with this was complete BS and, despite specifically asking, there was no indication of why my message had been consider spam. Big Brother is watching and he knows how to put you in your place.



### <--2 Mac Quotes

dent where the PC bailed the Mac out of a problem."

(Aaron D. Lewis)

"I'm a better person, I'm a more creative person, my reach is greater, my grasp is greater with an Apple computer."

(Actor Richard Dreyfus)

"Within the computer industry, the description 'more like a Macintosh' is always a high praise. The description 'more like Windows' is rarely used as praise."

(The Seattle Times)

Friends don't let friends use Windows.

Life is short. Use a Mac.

If builders built buildings the way Windows programmers wrote programs, then the first woodpecker that came along would destroy civilization.

Of course, one of Apple's biggest evangelists has a few things to say:

"When it comes to computers, unlike any other product I can think of, the prestigious or right or smart thing to do is portrayed as buying the same thing that the rest of the world does. What other product can you name where people are supposed to say,

"Gosh, I want to be the same as 95 out of 100 people?"

"Do you always buy the market-dominant product simply because of that market dominance?"

"Saying Windows is equal to Macintosh is like finding a potato that looks like Jesus and believing you've witnessed the second coming."

"Pigs will floss before I own a Wintel computer." (all Guy Kawasaki)



## unClassifieds

Need a manual?

Discount for ABCC members!



Apple Blossom Computer Club

<http://www.abccmug.org>

Give it a look.

Put in your own...

