

# The

# Computer Link

November 2009

The Newsletter of the Northern Neck Computer Users' Group

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**One week after meeting**

## Five Panelists Discuss Ebay Experiences

Guest expert Bill Haglan and a panel of four NNCUG member users took the membership on a tutorial of how best to use the ultra popular Ebay website at the October RW-C meeting.

Bill has been buying and selling books and auto parts on Ebay for more than ten years with great success. He even happily sold a Chris Craft boat once. He opened with suggesting newcomers to read the tips available on the site and then explained the setup for making auction sales and purchases.

Soon the member panelists, Betty Lehman, Bruce McMillan, Jim Sapione and Norm Farley took us on a tour of Ebays web site showing how to set up a sale. A good photo of the item is a must as is a well calculated starting price or in some cases a reserve (minimum) price. Panelists told us of some of their successful and happy experiences as well as customer satis-

faction complications.

Money transfers through PayPal accounts and the shipping cost is set up and calculated by Ebay. The purchaser pays usually automatically through electronic transfer of funds with

Ebay taking a very small percentage charge. The customer can contact the seller via email or phone with any questions or problems.

As for purchasing items on Ebay, there are

many pages of specific items on lists that advance toward page one in about 30 days when the final bids declare the winners. Most panelists prefer not to get into a bidding war and are usually pleased to find out they beat the price of a store-bought item by waiting until the last day to bid at a price they have researched and are comfortable to pay.

Each panelist told stories of complications and some of the

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**From left to right- Bill Hagland, Bruce Mc Millan, Betty Lehman, and Norm Farley. Photo by Chris Christensen**

## Google Chrome 3 – Ready for Prime Time!

By Ira Wilsker

### WEBSITES:

<http://www.google.com/chrome>  
<http://www.google.com/chrome/intl/en/features.html>  
<https://tools.google.com/chrome/intl/en/themes>

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Longtime readers of this column may remember that I wrote about Google's Chrome browser when it first came out. I found that Chrome version 1 was unstable, and incapable of loading many of the websites that I routinely visited. About a year ago, with high hopes, I tested the then new release of Google Chrome version 2, and found many of the same bugs and incompatibilities that I found in version 1; my title of that column said that Chrome 2 was "Not Yet Ready for Prime Time." I am now happy to report to you, my faithful readers, that the newly released Chrome version 3 is indeed **"ready for prime time."**

Google Chrome is a free download from Google at [www.google.com/chrome](http://www.google.com/chrome), and runs on XP and Vista, both 32 and 64 bit systems. The Google setup is a small 557kb executable file that downloaded quickly, and installed smoothly with no problems or conflicts on my Vista Home Premium 64 system. During the very quick install, Chrome identified that Firefox was my default browser, and asked if I would like to **import my bookmarks (favorites)** and other information from Firefox. A pull down menu was offered which would have also allowed import of items from Internet Explorer as well. Not

surprisingly, Chrome had setup as a default home (startup) page Google.com, which I chose to change to my existing personal startup page (My Yahoo). Other than the trivial question about whether I wanted a desktop and quick-start icon for Chrome, the new browser installed in seconds.

Since I was skeptical about Chrome, based on my past problems with the earlier versions, I proceeded to immediately visit those websites that I was unable to load in versions 1 and 2. To my pleasant surprise, all of the sites that failed to load in the earlier versions of Chrome not just loaded flaw-

**....loads very quickly, it is still very feature rich. It is amazingly intuitive**

lessly, but also opened very quickly.

My first impression of Chrome was that it loaded far faster than Internet Explorer or Firefox on my computer, and that it has a very clean look to the browser, in that is it not cluttered by a lot of infrequently used icons and toolbars, as well as other items that take up the precious real estate on the desktop. When I entered the URLs of my frequently visited websites, Chrome already had them filled ahead of my typing them, evidence that Chrome successfully imported them from Firefox. Since this was a clean install of Chrome, such that there could not be any online cache to load, I was amazed as to how quickly web pages loaded. While it was not a scientific experiment, and the evidence would only be anecdotal, I opened Internet Explorer 8 (IE8), Firefox 3.53, and Chrome 3 in adjacent windows. With-

out the need for a stopwatch, it was glaringly obvious that Chrome **loaded the same web pages much faster** than IE8 did, and somewhat faster than Firefox. Of these three browsers, all the latest builds running on a quad-core machine, Chrome was clearly the speed demon of the three. Chalk up a performance win for Chrome.

While I appreciated the clean appearance of Chrome when it opened, there are undoubtedly many who would like to change the appearance of Chrome to modify it to meet personal preferences. As I type this, Google has 29 themes available for Chrome at [tools.google.com/chrome/intl/en/themes](https://tools.google.com/chrome/intl/en/themes). The available themes range from "Minimal" that has an almost blank window with only minimal coloring, to several that are complex and brightly colored.

While Chrome is written in tight code, and loads very quickly, it is still very feature rich. It is amazingly intuitive and easy to use. One of my favorite features is clicking on a "+" in the tabs on the top of the page to open another browser window, and being greeted with interactive thumbnails of both open and recently closed websites; clicking on one would open that page in an instant. Chrome remembers the most frequently viewed pages, and displays thumbnails of those when a "New Tab" is selected. This makes it very easy to select a page, or the user can always type an address in the address bar or click on a bookmark. Another useful feature is the ability to search directly from the address bar. By simply typing a search term in the address space, the default search engine will be queried, and the

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## **iBrain: Surviving the Technological Alteration of the Modern Mind**

*Authors: Gary Small, M.D. and Gigi Vorgan*

*Reviewed by Bayle Emlein,*

Secretary, PC Community, California

PCC News, May 2009

www.pcc.org pcc (at) ix.netcom.com

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In iBrain, Dr. Small addresses the differences between the mental processes of “digital natives” and “digital immigrants.” Digital natives are those born after about 1980, who have never known a world without computers, Internet, video games. Those born before **electronic saturation** have, with varying amounts of skill and willingness, learned to use these electronic extensions of the human mind. But no matter how proficient we become, we always operate as outsiders, immigrants with the slightest trace of accent, not quite able to function with the unconscious abandon of a native speaker in the digital culture.

Gary Small is the Director of the Memory & Aging Research Center at the Semel Institute for Neuroscience & Human Behavior and the Center on Aging at UCLA. In previous books he popularized some of the new information on brain development, plasticity, and neurological changes.

This is a book, actual paper with static black ink. the book itself does not have a Web site, though Dr. Small has one that focuses heavily on the book -- <http://www.drgarysmall.com>. I went there and was immediately blasted with a feature clip from a Los Angeles area TV show's brief review of the book and the topic of **brain plasticity**.

The book has many short case studies/vignettes that make a point or describe how it looks in real

life. While these are all probably valid for the group they describe, it's missing large segments of the population. It seems to me that Dr. Small is stuck in a restricted point of view that every kid in the industrialized world has the same kinds of experiences that his UCLA environment provides his family. Where are the single mothers holding down two minimum-wage jobs, the foster kids pushed out on their 18th birthday? I wonder what kind of differences Dr. Small would find in looking at the brains, and minds, of the digital native generation who struggle with basic literacy or with the English language. He frequently mentions that digital natives '**multitask and parallel process with ease,**' though other sources find that multitasking sets the mind up for errors and may not be as productive as linear focus sequential tasks. Since he doesn't give his sources for these tidbits, it's hard to check his accuracy against other studies.

Frequent anecdotes put the brain science into everyday life and illustrate how we'd see the neurochemistry in the everyday world. There are several self-analysis surveys. They are designed to help the reader figure out from her/his own behavior what might be going on inside his brain. The questions are worded in such a way that they **add to understanding** of the topic.

There are points for both groups to consider. Digital natives, often fail to develop social and interpersonal skills. Digital **immigrants plod** through information, missing connections. Immigrants generally know they are in foreign territory: digital **natives might be surprised** to consider that their citizenship in the post-information age is not necessarily an all-encompassing advantage. This might be a book you'd like to show to your acquaintances (including family members) who have a different orientation than you do.

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**Google Chrome** *from page 2*

results displayed. While Google was obviously the initial default search engine, it was a simple process to change the default to my **personal favorite**, AllTheWeb. To test the search function from the address bar, I typed my name in the space where I would normally type a web address (URL), hit enter, and the AllTheWeb page instantly opened with the web pages with my name. It was also actually fun to drag and drop tabs, watching the contents being moved around the browser page; this way open tabs can be organized to satisfy the whims of the user. Tabs can also be dragged and dropped on the Windows desktop, where they appear as a complete new window, and can be dragged back to the original browser where the tab will be integrated back with the other tabs. Each tab is independent, and a problem or crash in one tab will not likely crash the entire browser and other open tabs.

Many would wonder why Google would create and promote Chrome as another free browser in the now **crowded field of browsers**. The developers of Chrome identified needs and problems with the existing browsers, and addressed those issues on the web page "A fresh take on the browser" ([www.google.com/](http://www.google.com/)

[chrome/intl/en/why.html](http://chrome/intl/en/why.html)). "Under the hood, we were able to build the foundation of a browser that runs today's complex web applications much better. By keeping each tab in an isolated "sandbox", we were able to prevent one tab from crashing another and provide improved protection from rogue sites. We improved speed and responsiveness across the board. We also built V8, a more powerful JavaScript engine, to power the next generation of web applications that aren't even possible in today's brows-

**Give Chrome my highest recommendation**

ers." By design, Chrome is intended to be **more secure than its competitors**, more stable with the "sandbox" concept, and faster. While I have not significantly tested the security capabilities of Chrome, and I am fully cognizant that security is a continuing effort, my initial impression is that Chrome is reasonably secure, although Google has recently released some security and features patches to harden the browser. As stated above, the Chrome developers were very successful in creating a very fast browser.

Chrome is an open source product, meaning that anyone can get the code and write applications for it. In writing Chrome, the developers acknowledged that they used open source

code from other sources, including code and components from Firefox and Apple's WebKit. Google has done an **excellent job with Chrome 3**, and in its first few days of release has captured a small but rapidly growing share of the browser market. As more users download and install Chrome and find that it does indeed offer substantial performance and safety improvements over Internet Explorer. Other than not being compatible with some of my favorite Firefox add-ons, I found Chrome to be a most capable browser. Since Chrome is open source, I can foresee comparable add-ons being developed for Chrome just as they had been for Firefox.

I can now give Chrome my highest recommendation, and suggest that Windows users download Chrome and give it a try. It is perfectly **OK to have multiple browsers installed** on a computer, and select which one to run at any time. Since Chrome will import favorites, bookmarks, and other information from IE and Firefox, it would be fully ready to use after being installed. Download Chrome from Google ([www.google.com/chrome](http://www.google.com/chrome)) and try it. Since it is **free, you really have nothing to lose**, and will likely gain dramatically improved browsing performance, security, and satisfaction. After all, is that not why we surf the internet anyway?

**iBrain** *Continued From Page 3*

I've heard that when writing was introduced to many oral cultures, it was lamented as the end of memory, since people no longer need to memorize in order to preserve history and culture. Whether writing is ultimately a **blessing or a curse**, it appears here for the foreseeable future. The same can be said for always-on electronic communication. It's silly to lament a simpler past. It's equally silly not to use the tools now available to understand the implications of changes taking place and make the most of de-

velopments. iBrain helps folks from each side understand their own point of view better and **gain some perspective** on the other. Definitely worth reading while waiting for the next discovery in brain science.

Product Information  
iBrain: Surviving the Technological  
Alteration of the Modern Mind  
List price, \$24.95  
Gary Small, M.D. and Gigi Vorgan  
Harper Collins, Publisher, 2008  
[www.drgarysmall.com](http://www.drgarysmall.com)

## APCUG 2010 Digital Photo Contest

“All NNCUG Photo SIG Monthly Contestants are encouraged to compete in the 2010 APCUG Nationwide Photo Contest,” according to President BJ McMillan and SIG Leader Jim Sapione.

Last year two entrants from NNCUG, Jim Davis and Linda Boyatzies won seven of the twelve national awards from almost 100 contestants.

Entries are to be made to <http://sharepoint.apcug.net/default.aspx> between January 1 and January 31, 2010.

The four categories are:

1. Places and Things
2. Animals
3. People
4. Enhanced.

The enhanced category can be anything that has been digitally enhanced either electronically or with software. Other category photos must not be enhanced.

Entrants may submit four photos per category. Images should be formatted to 300 dpi, no larger than 600 by 450 pixels and no smaller than 450 by 338 pixels. Limit JPG and TIFF formatted color or black

will be announced March 31, 2010 and will be posted on [www.apcug.net](http://www.apcug.net). Winners will receive Software and Logos. Questions about the contest should be addressed to Bill James, [bjames@apcug.net](mailto:bjames@apcug.net). **Ed.**



**November Photo SIG Winner**  
“Mood” by Richard Davis

and white pictures to no more than 500k per image. Three winners will be selected from each category and one will be selected best overall. Results

### **Ebay** From Page 1

attempts by wily sellers to beat the game. The system works when wisely following the rules. You can get your money back if a misrepresentation has occurred.

It will be interesting to note how many new Ebay users there will be by the next meeting. Thank you all for the great presentation.  
**Ed.**

### **October Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am with 31 members attending. The minutes of the September meeting were approved. The treasurers report was not available.

After Q&A, a panel of **Betty Lehman, Bruce McMillan, Bill Haglan, Jim Sapione and Norm Farley** discussed their experiences buying and selling items on Ebay

There was no drawing this month.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 am.

*Don Beard, Secretary*

### **Membership Report - November 2009**

**RENEW November**— Lou Dietrich, Frank Elliott, Richard Kwiecinski, F.N. Lee, Joe Moeller, John Parr, F. Peter Strum

**RENEW October**—David Brashears, Carol Hammer, Jim Sapione, Vicki White, Gerald Stiles, Don Beard, Robert Hall, Alta Miller, James Schwab

Membership dues are \$20 annually. Please send to:

Jim Thompson, Treasurer, NNCUG, P.O. Box 774, Burgess, VA. 22432

*For insertion into our local newspaper advertising, please send to [bevnjim@netscape.com](mailto:bevnjim@netscape.com) no later than 15th of the month.*

# The Computer Link

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## NNCUG Meeting Dates

**NNCUG GENERAL MEETING**

*Third Saturday 9:30 a.m.*

*Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury Meeting Room*

### **BEGINNERS SIG**

*Meets three times a year. Those interested, contact  
B.J. McMillan at 580-8666*

### **GENEALOGY SIG**

*Meets bi-monthly, 2nd Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.—RW-C  
Contact Ann Thompson at [athompson@kaballero.com](mailto:athompson@kaballero.com)  
to get on the mail list for announcements.*

### **PHOTOSHOP SIG**

*First Tuesday every month, 9 a.m.  
Lancaster Community Library, Kilmarnock  
For more information, Call Jim Sapione, 804-462-5831  
or message Bird@kaballero.com*

For a photo treat visit  
[www.raptapp.homestead.com](http://www.raptapp.homestead.com)



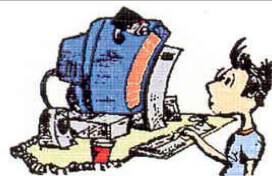
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Computer Help available by appointment. Call Betty Lehman 435-2011 or B.J. McMillan 580-8666

## Coming Attractions

Membership—November 21st, 9:30 am -RW-C—Scrapbooking  
Photo SIG—November 3rd, 9 am—Library- Photo Noise Art  
Genealogy SIG—November 11, 1:30 pm RW-C—Teaching Each Other