

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF
PERSONAL COMPUTER USERS
WHO FREQUENT THE INTERNET,
WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON GIST
SUPPORT GROUP MEMBERS.

safe surfing

- MOVIES & TV ONLINE
- WEB BROWSERS
- TUNE-UP TOOLS
- OTHER NIFTY TOOLS



Movies & TV Online

It's amazing how fast this niche has grown. I knew the ability to watch TV shows and feature films would become popular, despite the industries' restrictions and attempts to limit or even kill the services. What surprises me is that the movie and TV industry has apparently reduced its attempts to shut down some of these sites. I described **Hulu** some

months ago, and the site is still one of the best for TV shows. But here are four new (and, all together now, FREE!) sites with super capabilities:

OVGuide.com

A huge aggregator that links you to all forms of video. An excellent source, but especially for popular movies. Note though that one reviewer reported that some of the content seems to be pirated from DVDs. The company simply points out that they are not responsible for content on the sites to which they link viewers.



NinjaVideo.net

This site has a tremendous number of selections and you can view them instantly or download them for viewing later. Those I previewed were like most at other sites, lower resolution easily acceptable for laptop or small PC displays, but not very good on your larger, flat screens. Also, some titles require installation of fairly innocuous adware that tracks your browsing history and sends you occasional ads. That's no real big



deal, but it is a minor aggravation you need to consider. The titles were among the most recent available.

SnagFilms.com

This very well laid-out and efficient site focuses on documentaries.



They are very high quality pieces delivered in low to medium resolution. Each presentation is preceded by a short commercial. The real unique thing about SnagFilms is that you can "snag" full versions of any of the documentaries for playback on your own web site or on MySpace. This is an outstanding feature that will become even more valuable as the site adds more titles to its current list of over 250.

Truveo.com

This site is simply a search engine that specializes in video, very much like **OVGuide**. Enter your favorite TV show, movie or documentary and the engine will find many sources, maybe too many. There is a lot of material here, and that can become a problem when the



results aren't sorted and presented in a way that is useful. **OVGuide** lists the raw links in an effective manner that seems very logical. **Truveo**, on the other hand, helps me complete my search parameters (very commendable) and presents the results with fancy photos in little logos next to the actual link. I had excellent luck with TV shows and current news clips, but poor results with movies.

But Don't Forget Hulu!

In many ways it's still best. It's sleeker, faster and has all kinds of content. Although there are not as many new, full-length feature films as at, say **OVGuide** or **NinjaVideo**, the resolution is higher and the film is right there for the viewing, not at a third-party location.



Web Browsers

If you're like me, for years there has been no reason to switch from the free browser included with Windows operating systems. And with the introduction of



Internet Explorer (IE) 7, the browser seemed greatly improved. An even better Microsoft browser is promised soon, **IE8**. My experience testing other browsers never provided enough benefit to justify leaving the browser I knew best. Now that's changed.

Chrome

Google introduced this sleek and lightening-fast browser quite some time ago, but I tested it then and reported that I thought it needed work. Well it's gotten work and it paid off!



Chrome is even classier looking, has numerous new features and has suffered little if any degradation in speed. With one exception, the one that keeps me from using it as my primary browser, I really like the product. The problem is that the browser offers no auto-complete or auto-fill features like all of its competitors. That's a major weakness for many of us who frequently need to fill out standard forms. And because **Chrome** is fairly new, fewer add-ons are available than there are for the bigger players, although they are being written even as we "speak." Surely Google will modify **Chrome** to include numerous new features soon. But I'll have to wait until they do before I'll be using it regularly.

FireFox 3.0

Now here's a BROWSER! I like everything about **Firefox**, but I especially like the speed and stability



far better than **IE7's**. The only minor inconvenience is that you have to download many of the add-ons that you are accustomed to in **IE**. But the features are available directly through **Mozilla's** (the **Firefox** parent) web site and there are many to choose from, including some you cannot get with **IE**! For example **Adblock Plus** (discussed below) is available free only for **Firefox**.

Opera

Opera is "OK," but nothing to write home about. Nice looking and pretty fast, but it doesn't provide sufficient incentive to move from **Internet Explorer** in my mind. And it certainly doesn't beat out **Mozilla's Firefox** for speed, robustness and stability in my experience.



Internet Explorer 8

You can download and try the Beta version of **Internet Explorer 8** for free if you like.



I haven't done that yet, but from what I've read it looks a lot like **Firefox**! Were that true, it would be a big improvement for **IE**. But, frankly, I have trouble believing the hype. I am very impressed with the speed and stability of **Firefox** and now see no reason to go back to **IE**, even if it is greatly improved. I will try and report on it soon though, perhaps after its formal release.

Tune-Up Tools

Much of this month's newsletter contains information gleaned from recent PCWorld issues. Here are a few great (and FREE!) tools you can use to speed up and clean out your system.



But be sure to take precautions with these and any other programs you download:

1. Read the information on the screen before, during and after downloading very carefully so that you
 - a. do not pay for anything (like, for example, the upgraded version),
 - b. do not invoke any new home pages or any tools you don't want or need (like the yahoo or other toolbars and new home page offered with many downloads...just uncheck them and anything else you don't want) and
2. Set a system restore point before installing the program so you can revert to your previous state if necessary.

Advanced SystemCare



Get and use this nifty all-in-one tool to optimize your system, fix registry problems and defragment your registry, among other features, right here:

http://www.download.com/Advanced-SystemCare-Free/3000-2086_4-10407614.html?part=dl-6271865&subj=dl&tag=button&cdlPid=10996922

Glary Utilities



Another one-click program, and one that actually delivers! It's faster than Advanced SystemCare and, because of that, I suspect it may check a little less of the system. But it did find a few things that Advanced System Care did not. That's not proof by any means that one is better than the other though. In fact, you can use either one first and, using both one right after the other, find that each will detect and fix problems that the other did not find. So using both would not exactly be overkill, though one is probably enough. Glary has a "Startup Program" problem solver, a nice and unique addition. Here's where you get it:

http://www.download.com/3001-20_4-10508531.html?spi=ae8f6514270e1202e5ec589c063eb69d

Secunia PSI



This program checks your system for programs installed that contain security "holes" and need patches. I first installed it on a nearly new system and **Secunia** found a security hole on it. It's a very good idea to have a program like this around:

http://www.download.com/3001-20_4-10717855.html?spi=7a132a8cefb0c260a69859896c08cd2

Adblock

There are two versions of this fine add-on, one for **Internet Explorer** and one for **Firefox**. Since I use **Firefox** (FAR better than **IE**), I tested the one for that browser, but I expect both versions to be at least similar. One difference is cost: **Adblock Pro** for **IE** is Shareware for \$20; **Adblock Plus** for **Firefox** is completely free and I can attest to its efficiency. The best test was at **Snopes.com**. I could never get rid of two ads that seemed to pop up whenever I switched to **Snopes** until I installed **Adblock Plus**.



Other Nifty Tools

Foxit

Foxit, a free, small and fast program that lets you read PDF files, a streamlined, much less intrusive and less bloated replacement for **Adobe Reader**. is available here:



http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/reader_2/down_reader.htm

PWDHash.com

Password Hash (**PWDHash.com**) offers a very spartan but effective free program that secures your passwords. It allows you to use the same password for all sites you visit because the little browser add-on changes the password to something different at every site that is unique to that site only. By pressing a key (F2) before entering your password (or, alternatively, using a password that is preceded by two "at" symbols, "@@") the program is alerted to insert what is called a "hashed" password, basically disguised. This program really does improve security and makes it much easier to get around by letting you use the same password everywhere. But it also requires a few steps that not everyone is ready to take. You've got to reset your password everywhere you have a password, and you have to either start your new password with "@@" or remember to press the F2 key before entering your password everywhere you go.

LibrarySpot.com

Here's virtually a one-stop reference site! It is really an aggregator of reference sites, but it's the very helpful categories of subject matter that makes it so unique. I did think of a couple more categories it would be nice to include, and there are surely others that could be added: language translators and urban legend debunkers for example. Actually, it seems to me that it might be just as simple to "Google" whatever you're looking for. But this site is still intriguing in its variety and volume of available references.



HandymanUSA.com

handymanUSA

Just as its name implies, this is a great site for finding out how to repair things and what to consider before tackling projects large and small.

FreeBirthdayTreats.com



Here are a lot of folks that want you to know they remembered your birthday! If you're saddened that they're commercial companies and not the friends or relatives you might have liked to remember you, maybe the free goodies they give you will be some consolation.

Livingto100.com

Answer 40 questions and about 10 minutes later you'll see an estimate of your life expectancy along with ways to improve the results. To some of you the findings and recommendations may be pretty basic. But the site offers some very sound information.



Follow-Up

Cheers!

Last month I mentioned the anti-inflammatory benefits of resveratrol. This month I read an article by another physician in a publication by the same publishers of the original article (**Bottom Line**) indicating that grapes may not actually be a good source of resveratrol. But I was very happy to learn that one of my favorite beverages is the best source: red wine. The recommended "dosage" is an eight ounce glass each day. (I'm in!)



Netbook vs. Notebook

In a recent newsletter I mentioned the Netbook fad. I have since been asked by several people whether I would buy one of them instead of a regular notebook for a one-laptop family. A recent article in PC World expresses my thoughts very well. With prices coming down so far and so fast, there is really not much reason to go with the lower powered and lower capabilities of the tiny Netbooks. Prices are already within about \$50 for notebooks with faster processors, larger displays and an optical drive (rewritable CD or DVD drives). So my answer is "Don't bother with the Netbooks unless you absolutely need to save that extra \$50, you absolutely need a very small and light laptop, and you don't mind less power, a smaller screen and a much more easily stolen device."



Who is BPUTTRICH?

For the Christmas issue I offered a free gift to the first two people to register with and actually make a purchase through **Ebates.com**. The winners have now been decided, but I need your help in identifying one of them. I can tell that the first winner is **Betty Sue Karp from Los Angeles**, but all I know about the second winner is his/her **Ebates** screen name: "**bputtrich**" So that leaves me with two questions:

1. Which of the two gifts would you like Betty Sue?
2. Can anyone tell me who "bputtrich" is and how I can contact him/her?



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