

safe surfing

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

- 1 COUNTERFEIT DRUGS
- 2 FATHERS DAY IDEAS
- 3 WEB SITE FINDS
- 4 MORE EVOLVING TV
- 5 MEMORIAL DAY NOTE
- 6 STUMPER QUESTION

PLUS IMPORTANT AVG NOTE!!!

Counterfeit Drugs

A recent U.S. News & World Report article got my attention when it reported that as much as 10% of the drugs on the market may be counterfeit. As exports



increase, the ability of the FDA to control quality decreases. One anecdote told of someone taking a pill he was required to cut in half for each dose. He became suspicious when the pills didn't break the same way his earlier ones did. When he reported his suspicions to the brand's manufacturer, they paid to have him ship some pills, analyzed them and confirmed they were fakes. Another person became suspicious when she stopped realizing the

same benefit from the drug.

Lipitor and Viagra seem to be the most frequently counterfeited. Vitamins and supplements are less likely to be counterfeited only because they're generally cheaper to produce correctly. Nevertheless, there are a lot of inferior products on the market, especially herbals. One interesting idea for avoiding substandard non-prescription products is to buy two different brands of each product and alternate them. At least then you'll be improving the chances of getting a normal dose.

To detect phonies, experts recommend being especially sensitive to things like taste, texture, color, packaging, labeling and, of course, effect. If you have any question



at all, take the medication back to the pharmacy that dispensed it.

The FDA has published some particularly good suggestions for buying medication online:
<http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2007/NEW01623.html>

Fathers' Day Ideas

I'm the kind of guy it's nearly impossible to shop for, not only on Fathers' Day, but for any occasion.



When I see or think of something I'd like, I want to do the research and compare prices myself. It would absolutely KILL me if someone chose the wrong product or even paid too much for the right one! I don't know, it's a sickness I guess. So I get what I want when I want it and everyone in my family knows better than to even try! Occasionally someone will try to buy me that ideal

techno-geek item and hope that it will thrill me to tears. That's usually a disaster because, if I don't love it, I will probably resell it on eBay or Amazon to help fund whatever I really want. That used to cause some bad feelings, but now everyone just sees it as one of the (many) hazards of living with Barry. That may sound mean-spirited, but it **has** had the desired effect: few people try to buy me anything very valuable or unique anymore, leaving me to get my own toys whenever I want them!



Anyway...what I meant to suggest for Father's Day is this: if you have a guy like me, either give him a gift certificate to a restaurant he really likes (or someplace like Starbucks, Jamba Juice, Hollywood Video, etc.) or give him an envelope stuffed with cash. If he's NOT like me (and I hope there aren't many), but is still tech oriented, here are a few of my favorite things:

- Wii Fit (not in stores yet, but orders are being taken in advance)



- Wii Game Console (this was actually a gift to me, and a rare, wonderfully successful one!)
- A new Wii game to go with the above
- Garmin Nuvi 660 GPS
- Roundtrip ticket for two to New York City or Las Vegas (not tech, but it can't fail)



PC MAGAZINE Web Site Finds

Most months I try to identify a web site or two that are particularly fascinating. Each year PC Magazine publishes an issue with two excellent lists. In 2007, one list covers the top 100 **undiscovered** web sites: <http://www.pcmag.com/slideshow/0,1206,l=213934&s=25234&a=213919,00.asp>

(Check out Hardtofind800numbers.com and Lumosity.com just for example.)

Another list presents the top 100 **traditional** web sites: <http://www.pcmag.com/slideshow/0,1206,l=213025&s=25234&a=213961,00.asp>



If those 200 sites don't keep you busy enough, here's another great one, especially for gadget geeks like me:

<http://www.ProductDose.com>

Truly something for everyone! Try a pair of those electronic underpants, for example. And you do have to be somewhat concerned about a shock....sticker shock! Just about everything there is pretty pricey.

More on TV Evolving

Just this week NetFlix, the folks that started the mail-order DVD rental craze, announced an advancement many agree will again change the way we watch movies permanently. For \$99, NetFlix subscribers can buy a little box to attach to their television that will allow immediate streaming (that's techie-talk for real-time downloading) of any of the NetFlix collection (10,000 plus titles) through an internet connection. It will probably not happen in a year, but within a decade or so it is very possible that every home will have a similar box that will stream the very latest releases in high definition. Right now the NetFlix Player only transmits in standard definition and offers selections that aren't really the newest releases, but that is certain to change. The (Apple, Vudu far) is insurance definition and will appear right There are an LG BluRay device that will allow high definition downloads.



competition and Amazon so that high better selection around the corner. already plans for

And I can't believe I haven't mentioned the big red box yet!! Found in many Safeway stores, some McDonald's restaurants and soon Walmart stores, the real name of the box is, cleverly enough, "RedBox!" McDonald's owns



a large part of the company and I am VERY impressed. They are the only real competition against online, mail-order vendors (e.g., Netflix and Blockbuster), on the one hand, and neighborhood brick and mortar outlets like Blockbuster and Hollywood Video, on the other. The unusual aspect of RedBox is the cost: any title (from

classic to the most recent) is only \$1 for one day. You can easily check for a location near you and can even reserve a DVD right here:

<http://www.redbox.com/Rent/RentInfo.aspx>

Then just pay for a day with your credit card, return it to **any** RedBox location nationwide within a day and you're cool! For every day you keep it it's another buck, with a maximum of \$25 in 25 days. It's perfect for a variety of scenarios: bringing a DVD along to watch in the hotel, on the laptop or for the kids to watch in the car on a trip, or just to watch something at the last minute at home. So if you know exactly (or almost exactly) when you want to watch a video, it's cheaper than "Pay per View," DVD rentals online or from a video store (unless you keep it longer than few days). I have yet to find a released title unavailable, and the quality seems great (though I cannot accurately speak for the resolution, I assume it is as good as a normal DVD). This is an excellent idea and beautifully compliments the other two legs of the "movie rental triad" (store and mail order). Even if another leg proves successful (online streaming of video), this idea might just become a permanent part of the mix.

Memorial Day Note

I'm working on this article on Memorial Day. You may have heard this: "If you can read this, thank a teacher. If you can read it in English, thank a soldier!" O.K., maybe a bit extreme, but not meant to be racist or jingoistic. If you get a chance, watch the fabulous film **Flags of Our Fathers**. It's the perfect movie to remind us of the horrible sacrifices we expect our youngsters to make in wartime, and of the one thing all rational humans, irrespective of politics or nationality, agree on: war is truly hell and must always be the last resort.



Barry Codron, a retired U.S. Air Force pilot, lives with his wife and doggie, near his children and grandchildren and their doggies, in the Sacramento area. He enjoys writing and consulting in areas including technology and music, among other fields that pique his interest from time to time. He welcomes your questions, comments, ideas or corrections at barry.mart@sbcglobal.net.

Stumper Question

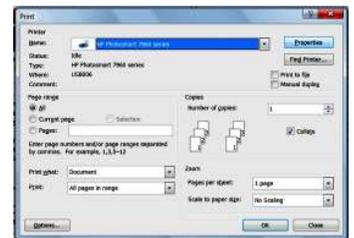
If you routinely write to sites online using their own web site message writing process, you've had this problem. You go to "Contact Us" and enter the required information, including a lengthy text entry that constitutes your message in their form. You then click on "Send" and their system either rejects your message for some obscure reason that requires you to make a correction (e.g., "quotation marks are not permitted"), sending you back to a blank form entry page, or their system "times-out" or crashes, also sending you back to the beginning without your original draft. What simple step can you take to insure this does not happen to you and that you retain your sanity?



This is embarrassingly simple, but a REAL timesaver at those sites that haven't programmed in the common courtesy of automatically saving your previous entries. Just select all the text in your message before submitting or sending it (shortcuts control, A, then control C). Then you'll be able to paste (shortcut control V) the text into the message box if the submission fails for some reason.



Next month puzzle me this: If you sometimes print in color and sometimes print in black and white (mono), it's a real hassle to have to open the print dialogue to change all the settings for each style of printing and then back again for the opposite style. Is there a way to streamline that process?



AVG Antivirus NOTE: Be sure to upgrade your free version of AVG to 8.0 by going here and clicking on the green or blue download link (not the ad-sponsored red link):
http://www.download.com/AVG-Anti-Virus-Free-Edition/3000-2239_4-10320142.html?part=dl-AVGAntiVir&subj=dl&tag=button

