East SIG Report – May 2024

After welcoming members to the May meeting of East SIG, host Frank Maher outlined the nights agenda below:

Presentation 1: **Q&A** with Dave Botherway
Presentation 2: **16 Reasons Linux is better than MS Windows** by Trevor Hudson
Presentation 3: **Shutter Encoder – A Quick Update** by Peter Carpenter
Presentation 4: **HDD Scan** by Peter Carpenter
Presentation 5: **Replacing Windows Search with the Everything toolbar** by Frank Maher
Presentation 6: **Patch my PC** by Frank Maher
Presentation 7: **Basics of Total Commander** by Peter Carpenter
Presentation 8: **Install and running Total Commander** by John Swale
Presentation 9: **Clover, Tabbed folders in Windows 10** by Neil Muller

Q&A

with Dave Botherway.

Question 1: Recently while using Excel, I pressed a number on the numeric keypad and the cell number was displayed instead of the number I pressed. The next time, the cursor jumped to a different part of the spreadsheet which also didn't reflect what was being pressed on the numeric keypad. I thought it might be a keyboard issue, so I tried another one, but the problem persisted. I determined that it's not an issue with Excel since the same thing happens with other programs. Does anyone have any ideas on what might be causing this?

Answer 1: [Richard Bradford] It may be a problem with the Numeric Lock on the keyboard. The Numeric key may not be in numeric mode but changed to cursor mode. On my laptop the Num Lock is above the 7.

[Peter Carpenter] Laptops have Function keys labelled Fn. You may have to hold down the Function key then press Num/Lock key on your laptop to change back from cursor mode.

[Peter Bacon] Could you try to use the onscreen keyboard and see if that works.

Question 2: When sending emails to Hotmail addresses, they keep getting bounced back. To verify, I sent myself an email from my MelbPC email address, and it went straight to my Hotmail spam folder. While I do receive emails in Hotmail spam, they don't appear in the main inbox, so I assume I'm missing many messages. I'm concerned that people might send me emails that I won't receive.

I need to send out 280 emails this weekend, some of which are to Hotmail addresses. I suspect they will bounce, so I might try using another email address if those recipients have another. Does anyone have any suggestions on how to fix this?

Answer 2: It might be worth lodging a problem with iHelp. They have a better understanding of the mail system, particularly ours and see if they have any ideas for you.

16 Reasons Linux is better than MS Windows

by Trevor Hudson

The second presentation of the night titled "16 Reasons Linux is Better than MS Windows" was delivered by Trevor Hudson, a recent convert to the Linux operating system. Trevor began by showcasing a video he had prepared and uploaded to YouTube.

Introduction:
To highlight the growth of Linux, Trevor noted that the market share of the Windows operating system in the USA has decreased from 95% to 65% over the past 14 years. During this period, both Apple and Linux have tripled their market shares.

While Windows 7 and 10 were successful, Microsoft has struggled with several other products, including Windows 8 and 8.1, Windows smartphones, Virtual Mixed Reality, and Windows 10S, the latter which suffered from a lack of available apps. Additionally, Windows 11 has not been well-received, partly because it requires many users to purchase new computers.

Microsoft is also facing stiff competition from Apple's faster chips and the zero cost of using Linux. The necessity for many users to buy new hardware to run Windows 11 has further hindered its adoption.

The 16 reasons Trevor believes Linux is better than Windows.

1. The Linux operating system and most applications are free, unlike Windows and Office programs.
2. When you download programs in Linux, you don't get unwanted bloatware installed, like you often get with Windows.
3. Linux has less tracking than Windows, provided you don't use Google Chrome or Edge.
4. Linux is more secure and less targeted by malicious actors than Windows.
5. Linux is more stable and requires fewer updates than Windows, which is full of security holes.
6. Linux makes it easy to customize the desktop, mouse, and icon positions.
7. Linux allows you to change the SSD or hard disk drive to another computer without having to reinstall anything.
8. Linux can run with only 4 GB of RAM and with a slow Intel i3 processor.
9. Linux has free Software for 95% of programs most people require. There are thousands of Windows equivalent free programs for Linux, like LibreOffice, Audacity, and many games.
10. Driver updates are automatically installed in Linux.
11. Linux users receive fewer annoying advertisements than Windows users, and ads can be blocked with free software.
12. Most viruses target Windows computers, with many Linux users don't bother installing antivirus programs. In 10 months “ClamTk” has only quarantined 3 possible virus threats in Linux.
13. Trevor has not received any Malware or Trojans since using Linux.
14. If a keylogger is received, an external clone of the system can be installed
15. If targeted by Ransomware, a reboot or install an SSD clone of the C drive
16. Community support with MelbPC members with access to SIG & iHelp with the club’s motto “Users helping users”.

The YouTube banner for the video is depicted in Figure 1. You can watch Trevor's video at the following URL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yfyXJzw07Y.

Figure 1 – Trevor's YouTube banner

Shutter Encoder – A Quick Update

by Peter Carpenter

For first-time installations of Shutter Encoder, the user interface may appear somewhat simplistic, leaving users unsure of what to do next. In this presentation, Peter Carpenter guides new users through the entire process, from the initial installation to encoding a video to the H.264 MP4 format.

Peter uses a short video clip featuring the Three Sisters to describe the editing process. Once the installation of Shutter Encoder is complete, the user interface opens, as shown in the left window in Figure 2. Peter demonstrates how to load the video file, crop an unwanted section at the beginning, introduce fade-in and fade-out effects at the start and end of the clip, and finally render the video to MP4 format.

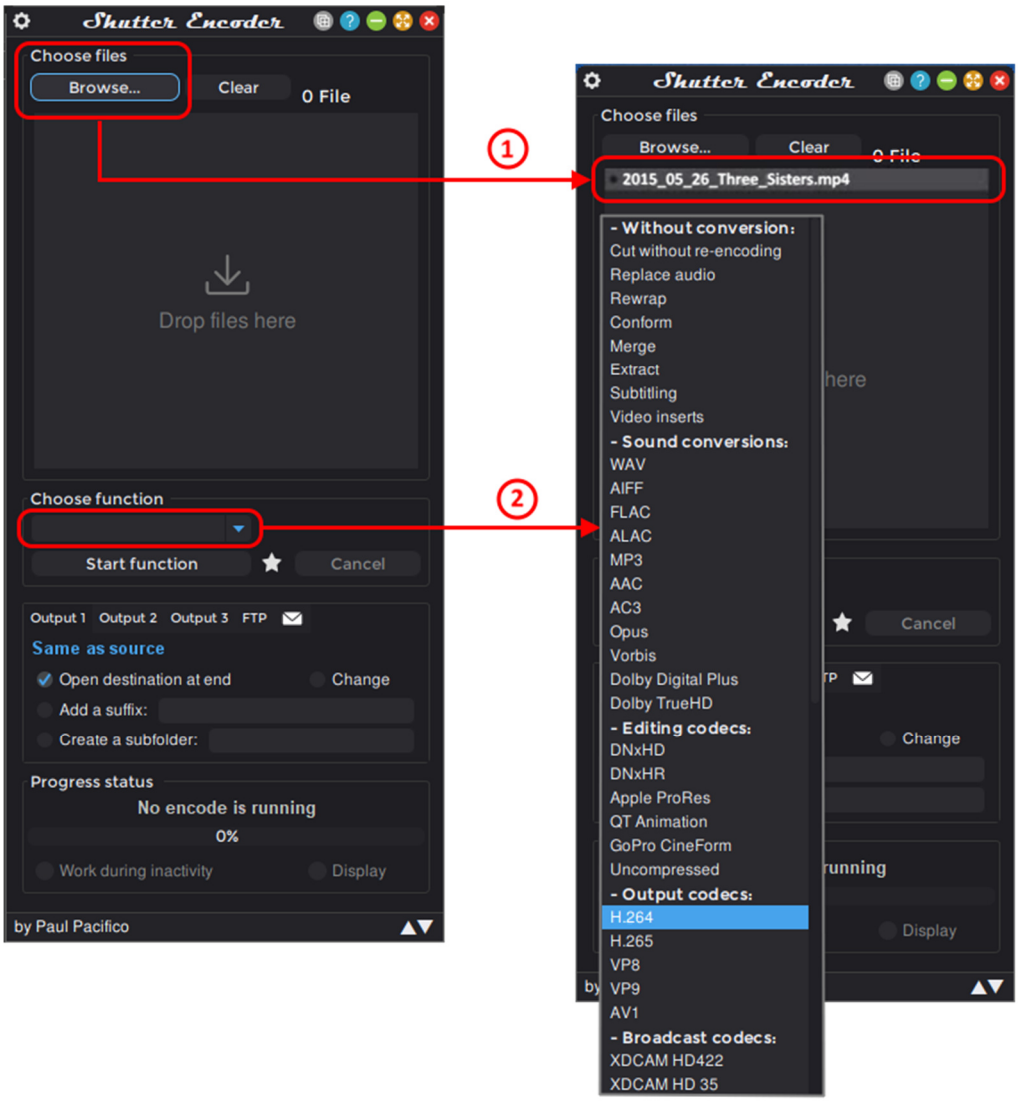

Figure 2 – Installation Window – Browse File & Choose Function options

Step 1: Choose Files.

To select a file to edit, two options are available. Select either via the *Browse* button located top left of the window, or drag & drop a file to the panel displaying *Drop files here*.

Step 2: Choose Function.

To choose how you want to edit the selected file, click on the blue triangle labelled *Choose function.* A window then opens to display a list of potential editing options.
In Figure 2 *Output Codec H.264* is selected and is highlighted in blue.

Upon selecting the H.264 codec, editing functions as shown in Figure 3 below appear.

Figure 3 – Shutter Encoder displaying Peter's Three Sisters video prior to editing

Step 3: Output

Below the preview window is where key editing controls are located. Editing steps (1) to (4) below are depicted in Figure 4.

(1) Place the cursor on the vertical red line under the preview window and drag it to the approximate start of the clip you wish to keep.

(2) To accurately select the starting point of the edit, Peter used the play button, along with the forward and reverse facing arrow heads to move the red line to the starting frame. This frame is then fixed by selecting the square bracket, which indicates the start of the clip to be edited and saved.

(3) The *transitions* tool is then used, firstly to fade in the video and audio at the start of the video clip, and to fade out both at the end of the video.

(4) Select the *Start Function* button to encode the edited clip to mp4 H.264 format. On completion of the encoding, Peter played the edited video. He repeated the encoding using a newer VP9 webm codec. The webm format gave a considerably smaller video output file size, with no noticeable degradation to the image quality.

Figure 4 – Shutter Encoder – Step 3 Output steps 1 to 4.

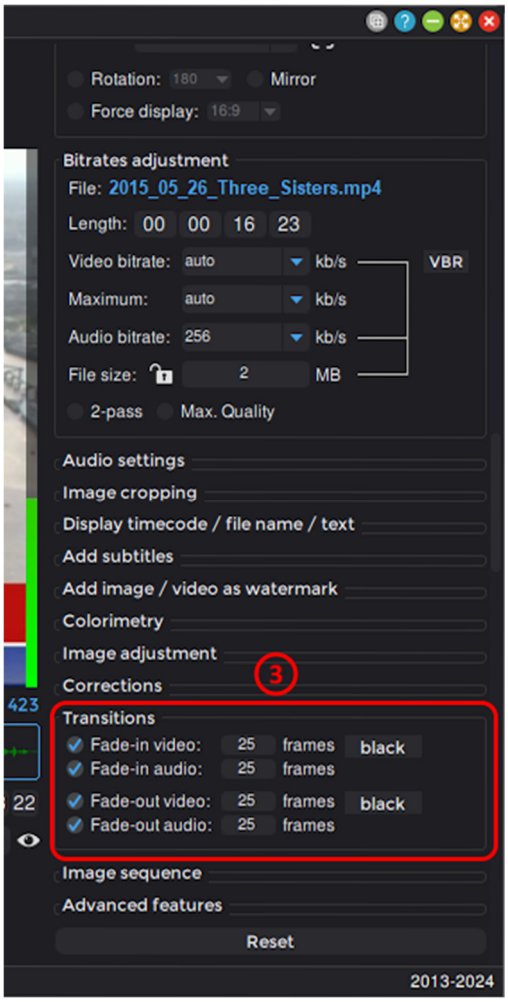

Figure 5 – Shutter Encoder – Additional adjustment settings

HDDScan

by Peter Carpenter

When Peter noticed that his computer was taking longer than usual to save a screenshot, he suspected something was wrong and decided to investigate.

First, Peter turned to HDSentinel, software that monitors hard disks, to check the disk where he saved the file. HDSentinel reports and displays disk health, performance degradations, and failures. The software indicated that the drive was okay, but may have a problem.

Still concerned, Peter turned to a forum on the Spinrite website, where he learnt about a program called HDDScan, available at https://hddscan.com. HDDScan is freeware software for hard drive diagnostics, (bad blocks and bad sectors), displays S.M.A.R.T. attributes, and allows some HDD parameter adjustments. It is a portable program that does not require installation. Although HDDScan is read-only and cannot repair the disk, it provides more detailed information than HDSentinel.

HDDScan Control Elements: Refer Figure 6

- Select **Drive drop box** - contains a list of supported storage devices in a system. The list contains models and serial numbers of the devices. The icon displayed defines the possible storage type.
- **S.M.A.R.T**. button - generates S.M.A.R.T. attributes report.
- **TESTS** button — shows pop-up menu to select read and write tests
  When you click on TEST button, the pop-up menu offers you one of the tests. If you select any test — the Test selection dialog will be opened.
- **TOOLS** button — shows pop-up menu to select available drive's controls and features
- **More** button — shows drop-down menu with program controls

Figure 6 – HDDscan Control Window

When Peter ran HDDScan, his first challenge was identifying which of the six disks in his desktop computer needed to be scanned, as HDDScan identifies drives by their model numbers. Peter knew which disk the image file was saved to, but not its model number. To resolve this, he opened Windows Disk Management, as shown in Figure 7.

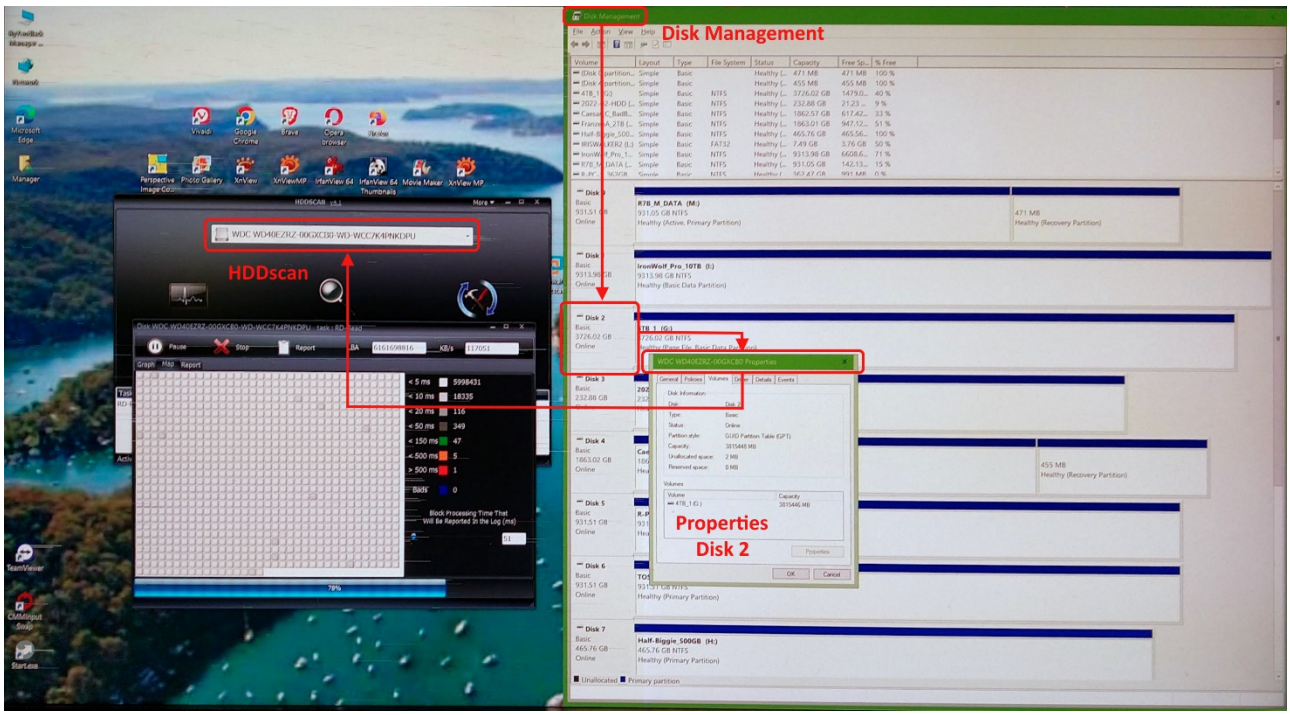

Figure 7 – Determining Disk Identification

In Windows Disk Management, the disks are labelled as Disk 1, Disk 2, etc. By right-clicking on "Disk 2" and selecting Properties, Peter was able to see the model number of the drive (WDC WD40EZRZ-00GXCB0-WD-WCC7K4PNKDPU), as depicted in Figure 7.

With the model number identified, Peter selected it from the dropdown list in HDDScan and initiated read and write tests by clicking the Tests icon. Due to the 4TB size of the disk, the tests took a considerable amount of time. The results revealed that the 4TB drive contained many bad blocks, as shown in Figure 8. HDDScan also provided various other reports and information, such as a graphical view, HDD map, and block details that were presented to his audience.

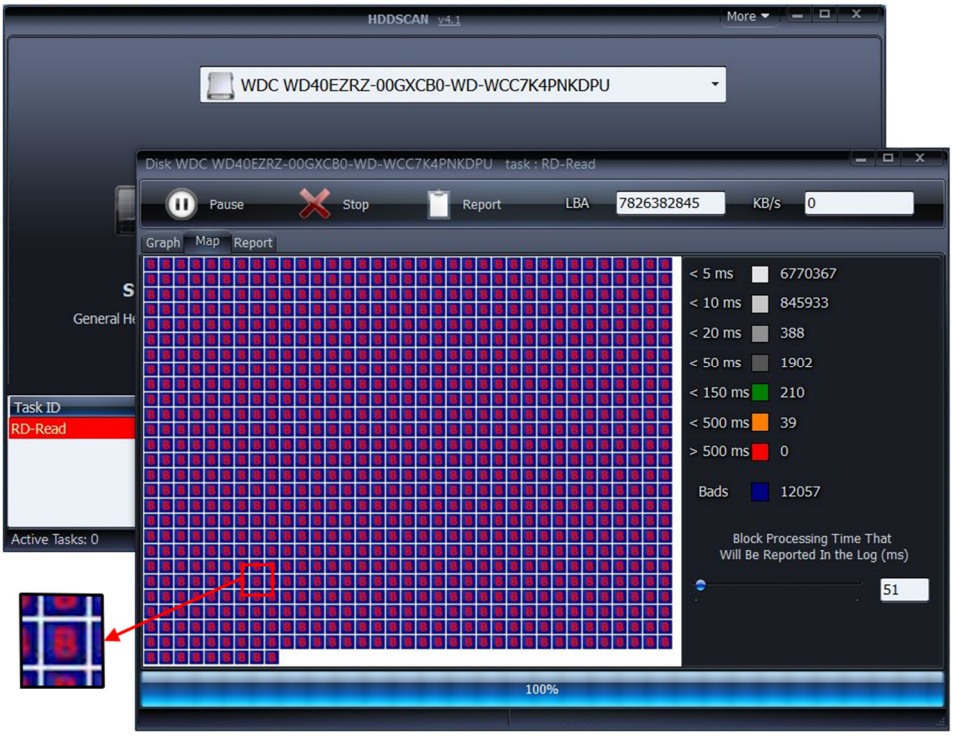

Figure 8 – Completed HDDscan window

Given that HDDScan only tests storage devices for errors and cannot repair a disk, Peter purchased Spinrite data recovery software from GRC at https://www.grc.com.

Figure 9 – SpinRite

Spinrite identified an unrecoverable sector on the 4TB disk and attempted to recover as much data from that sector as possible. It then locked the faulty sector shown in Figure 10 screenshot 1 to prevent data from being stored there again. Figure 10 shows four screenshots taken as Spinrite examined and recovered data from the bad sector.

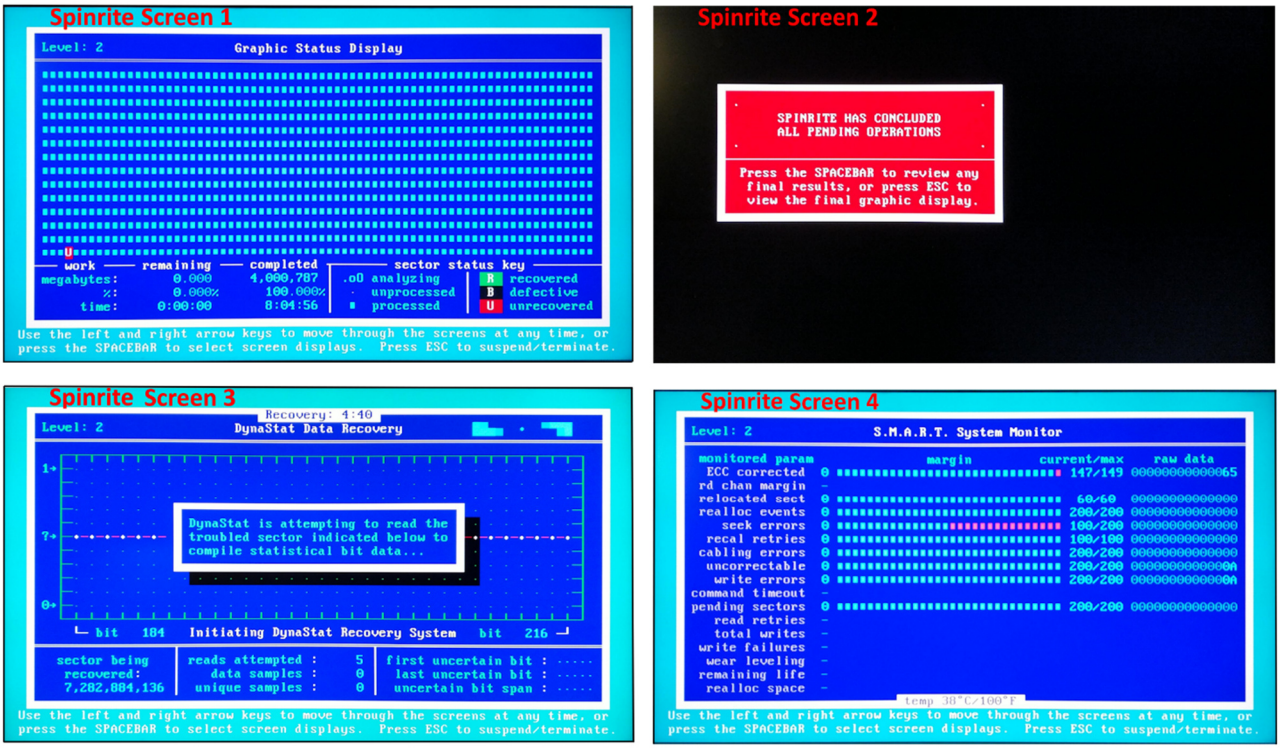

Figure 10 – Spinrite screenshots taken during data recovery.

Peter is now satisfied with his "perfectly functional 99.9% effective area, capacity disk drive" and recommends Spinrite to others, suggesting they might discover previously unknown issues with their disk drives.