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MICROSOFT SURFACE COMPUTER

Darry D Eggleston

Bill Gates introduced a new 150-pound coffee table 'surface computer' computer on May 30th. He bragged, "Instead of a computer on every desktop, it will be every desktop is a computer."

Microsoft Surface, running Windows Vista, has a 30-inch display under a hard-plastic tabletop, allows people to touch and move objects on-screen for everything from digital finger painting and jigsaw puzzles to ordering off a virtual menu in a restaurant.

One cool application is that one can just lay a digital camera onto the Surface PC and the photos on that camera's card "spill out" on the Desktop. Using your hands, you can rearrange the photos, resize them or discard them.

¹ Published for the New Users Group of the Tampa Bay PC User Group < <http://tbpcug.org> >. Permission to reprint articles is granted if all of these conditions are met: (1) the author is credited, (2) the article is published in full, without unauthorized editing of content, and (3) a link to or PDF of the reprint is sent to DarryD@darryd.com .

Microsoft shunned its usual computer manufacturing partners and decided to take control of the surface computer's hardware production using an undisclosed contract manufacturer.

According to [CNN Money](#), Business 2 Blog, May 30:

"Engineers in the same division responsible for the Xbox video game console have come up with a touch-controlled tabletop computer that they hope will change the way people collaborate.

"Basically, this is a 30-inch touch-controlled monitor with a modified version of Windows Vista behind it. (Note that I said "touch-controlled," not "touch-sensitive" — more on that in a moment.) The interface allows you to scroll through the navigation with the sweep of a finger, and view photos or videos or access applications. If you'd like to see more ways the technology could be used, check out the video linked here.

"The interface allows you to scroll through the navigation with the sweep of a finger, and view photos or videos or access applications."

[Click here to see a video of the computer](#) or [here for another video](#).

This may be just another extension of [the future of productive office](#).

10 REASONS YOU DON'T NEED VISTA

[MaximumPC](#) magazine lists 10 reasons you don't want Vista:

1. Requires powerful PC.
2. Application Incompatibilities.
3. Crazy Expensive.
4. No Hardware Audio.
5. Incompatible with Bleeding-Edge Hardware.
6. Not Good With Some Games.
7. Consumer Unfriendly Digital Rendering Media.
8. Poor Driver Support.
9. User Account Control.
10. You Can Wait.

CHECKMATE

by Berry F. Phillips, "Checkmate," Computer Club
of Oklahoma City [eMonitor](#), June 2007, p. 8²

Man-vs-machine has been a theme that has intrigued the public for many years.

"The Turk" was a chess playing automaton that was a sensation in Europe in the 1770's. The Turk was a wooden cabinet with a chess board on top played by a life-sized mannequin dressed in Turkish style. This mysterious device could play against and often defeat human chess opponents including Napoleon Bonaparte and Benjamin Franklin. In truth, the Turk was a clever illusion as the cabinet concealed a human chess expert who moved the Turk's arm and played the games.



The Turk

The Turk was created by Wolfgang von Kempeler and was not only a success in Europe but later in the United States. Eventually, the Turk was no longer popular and was destroyed in a fire in Philadelphia in 1864.

Edgar Allen Poe wrote a widely-read 1836 essay proposing that the Turk concealed a human chess player.

The best known of the man-vs-machine devices was the world famous Deep Blue. Deep Blue began as a chess program named Chipset (later Deep Thought) and was created by [Feng-hsiung Hsu](#) and [Thomas Anantharaman](#) at Carnegie Mellon University. The creators later joined IBM Corporation which supported the development of the system.

Deep Thought was eventually renamed Deep Blue, a twist on IBM's corporation nick name, Big Blue. Deep Blue was a RS/6000 SP parallel processor with specialized microchips for chess and calculates 200 million chess

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moves per second. Deep Blue lost a six game match to world chess champion, Gary Kasparov, in 1996. But in the 1997 rematch, Deep Blue made history by defeating Kasparov 3.5 games to 2.5 games.

Many in the chess world believe that [Gary Kasparov](#) is the greatest human chess player. He had never lost a game previously and was unnerved at his loss and began ascribing almost human features to the computer. While Deep Blue had access to all of Kasparov's games, Kasparov was not allowed to see Deep Blue's previous games for study. He received \$400,000 for his loss and would have received \$700,000 if he had won.

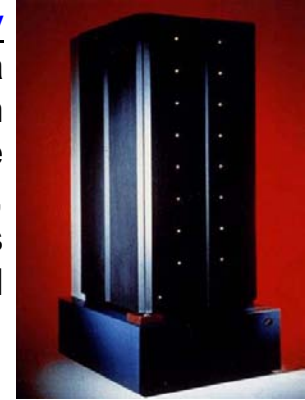
IBM retired Big Blue after the match.

Another famous chess playing computer was Deep Fritz backed by a German company ChessSise and written by two programmers, Franz Marsh and [Mathias Feist](#). The word, deep, is a nod to IBM's Deep Blue.

Deep Fritz was in the news in 2001 when a chess match ended in a 4-4 tie with Russian chess expert, Vladimir Krammick.

In 2003, the long awaited chess match between Gary Kasparov and Deep Junior, a three-time world champion computer developed by [Amir Ban](#) and [Shay Bushinsky](#) who were both from Israel was played in New York City. The match ended in a 3.0 to 3.0 tie. Kasparov quipped to his mother, "At least I didn't lose."

Well, this subject is getting too "deep" for me. Now I don't have to worry about anymore literary "moves" since I have been officially "checkmated."



Big Blue



Deep Fritz

WAL-MART SELLS SKYPE CALLING CARDS

According to [Network World](#) magazine ("Wal-Mart Selling Prepaid Skype Calling Cards," by Steve Taylor and Larry Hettick, May 28, 2007, p. 29), "... customers will be able to buy Skype-certified headsets, WebCams and handsets plus prepaid Skype calling cards at 1,800 Wal-Mart stores."

Wal-Mart is the first retailer in the U.S. to offer Skype's prepaid cards and it will set up Skype Internet communication sections inside each store's electronics department selling up to 9 different Skype-certified products.

"For customers who want to make international outbound calls using Skype, they can buy a \$20 prepaid card and make international cards for rates as low as 2.1-cents-per-minute. A second prepaid card option offers 3 months of unlimited outbound calls within the United States and Canada for \$8.85.

"Handsets, which users can plug into their Internet-connected PC to make the VoIP³ calls start at less than \$15; cordless phone systems that plug into an Ethernet connection (and don't need to use a PC to make the VoIP calls) are priced at about \$150 and WebCams [Web cameras] begin at \$25."

ZONEALARM'S PESKY LOG FILE

PC World magazine ("Pesky Log Files," June 2007, page 36) reports that ZoneAlarm has a file, *tvDebug.log*, which can grow up to 25 MB over time. To find it, use Start > Search and type "tvdebug" (without the quote marks).

The program also creates hundreds of other log files, called *Zalog*.txt* (where * = any characters).

You can delete these files without damage, because ZoneAlarm will re-create them the next time it is activated.

It is best to delete them and restart your system immediately.

³ *VoIP* is short for "Voice over Internet Protocol," a category of hardware and software that enables people to use the Internet as the transmission medium for telephone calls by sending voice data in packets using IP (Internet Protocol) rather than by traditional circuit transmissions of the public switch telephone network (PSTN) — also known as 'plain old phone'.

AD-AWARE UPGRADE COMING

[Lavasoft](#) says that the new version of its popular Ad-Aware anti-spyware program, due in June, will feature to improve detection of adware and hidden malware; a scanning engine that goes easy on PC system resources; and an updated interface.

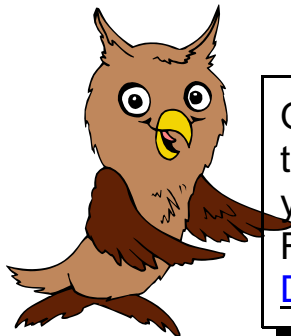
A personal-use version will remain free while the \$40 Ad-Aware 2007 Pro will include advanced features such as Ad-Watch TrackSweep, a tool that clears the cache, cookies and history in Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Opera.

INSTANT MESSENGER ATTACKS JUMP 73%

[ComputerWorld](#) (“Security vendor finds a sharp rise in instant messaging-based attacks,” by Matthew Broersma, Techworld.com, June 1, 2007) reported 170 instant-messaging [IM] threats so far this year, a 73% increase over the same period last year.

“This shows a sharp increase in IM-based attacks with 20 threats detected in May alone, and an average so far this year of more than one-new-threat-per-day.

“The attacks rely on social engineering to spread malicious code, typically sending a link that appears to come from an IM contact. Because of the informal nature of IM, such tricks are more likely to succeed than they would in an email message, where users are more cautious.”



On the 4th Tuesday of each month — except July — the [Greater Tampa Bay PC User Group](#) offers a you-ask-I-answer session for New Users at 7 p.m. in Room 129 of Brandon High School, in Brandon, FL. [Darry D](#) hosts this unscripted session.

PHISHING EMAIL DUPES 1,400 EXECUTIVES

The [Channel Register](#) (“Phony BBB email dupes more than 1,400 execs,” by Dan Goodin, May 30, 2007) reports “a provider of online security services has uncovered a highly sophisticated phishing⁴ scheme that has duped at least 1,400 US executives. They were fooled into sending sensitive information in response to an email purporting to come from officials at the Better Business Bureau.

The ruse starts with an email addressed to a high-ranking company executive that claims a customer has recently filed a complaint. The email invites the recipient to review a copy of the complaint by clicking on a link.

“The link installs a malicious *post logger* that transmits all information submitted through Internet Explorer to a Website controlled by the attackers.”

Using reverse-engineering a technician was able to locate a site that stored detailed information on 1,400 executives who fell for the scam.

USERS FALL FOR WEB AD VIRUS STUNT

[itnews.com.au](#) (“Users Fall for Web Ad Virus Stunt,” May 21, 2007) says a Belgian IT security professional, Didier Stevens, purchased the domain name ‘drive-by-download.info’.

Then he “created an ad on Google AdWords offering users the chance to infect their PC with malware simply by clicking on a link. The ad stated: ‘Is your PC virus-free? Get it infected here!’. The ad was displayed 259,723 times and 409 people clicked on the link.

“The site contains no malware, but security experts warned that similar methods are used by hackers to get users to visit sites containing viruses and malware that infect the user’s machine.

“Stevens ran the ad for six months for around \$23, which means that it cost only six-cents-per-click or per potentially compromised machine.”

⁴ *Phishing*, pronounced “fishing,” is a scam to steal valuable information such as credit cards, social security numbers, user IDs and passwords.