
The Computatelist

Quarterly Publication of the Philatelic Computing Study Group

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Do we have a future and what is it?

by Dick Sine, PCSG president, president@pcsg.org

Where Do We Go from Here?

The Philatelic Computer Study Group is a membership organization. Note the word “membership,” for I will be referencing it again as this article continues. PCSG is one of a few hundred specialized philatelic organizations that have qualified for and have been approved as American Philatelic Society Affiliates. Thus, there has been a belief both on the part of those who began and continue PCSG, as well as an “neutral” third-party in the form of the APS board of directors, that PCSG had and has a valid role in philately.

Early PCSG leadership, as is necessary in virtually all such groups, was quite strong. And, as that leadership has been succeeded, the “development fervor” is not as strong—not to be unexpected—and we are in a “just what is our role” mode. At the time of the PCSG founding—or, really, its predecessor’s founding—the role of the home computer in furtherance of stamp collecting was quite undefined and amorphous.

There were no commercial software products available to the collector, only a very few collectors were using PCs. Today it is the rare stamp dealer who does not have an e-mail address. eBay and its competitors have become the storefront for their stamp and postal history wares, and on-line chat boards carry news of the hobby much more quickly than monthly stamp club meetings, monthly journals, or even weekly periodicals.

Commercial products available to the stamp collector, in furtherance of hobby enjoyment, have far out-stretched those vertical offerings specifically offered to philatelists. Yes, there is an array of collection-specific products aimed at aiding in cataloging individual collections. Perhaps more importantly, there many, many “generic” products that add even more enjoyment to stamp collecting ... products ranging from graphics and scanning hardware and software to databases and spreadsheets that enable the collector to greatly personalize information on his/her holdings far more than specialized software publishers can afford to provide. There is nearly something for everyone, so to speak.

Back to PCSG: where do we fit into all of this? Keeping current of what is available is a large task. Al Gore does a

great job presenting such information in *The Computatelist*, when such information is made available. The PCSG web-site is becoming dated because of a lack of current information. As one who maintains a large philatelic database, I know the amount of time needed solely for care-and-feeding (I dislike the term “maintenance”), let alone providing new content.

So, it all comes down to participation. Without membership participation, PCSG cannot really survive, let alone prosper. This is not a negative viewpoint designed to curry a sense of guilt in you, the members. Rather, it is an opinion based on 10 months as president of an organization of which I had been familiar from the outside for a long time and from the inside since December.

Unlike a specialty philatelic group where members have a common collecting interest, and journal and web articles are based on what members have discovered while working with their individual collections, PCSG is a service group where activity is apart from our individual collecting interests. We either stand alone as such an organization, or at least in a very sparse company.

With all of the above stated and serving as a backdrop, I return to the headline of this column:

Do we have a future and what is it?

Stark as the above sub-head is, I believe it to be the proper question. In short, finally, we need volunteers.

Volunteers to discuss for *The Computatelist* and/or the web-site their experiences with various hardware and software

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Inside this issue...

- Self-publishing at Lulu.com
- Online exhibitions at EXPONET
- Computing tips for the computing philatelist

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The Computatelist

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Philatelic Computing Study Group

<http://www.pcsq.org>

Mission

The Philatelic Computing Study Group (PCSG) is an independent, non-profit computer users group with the goal of assisting stamp collectors to maximize the utilization of their computers in conjunction with the hobby of stamp collecting. The PCSG is Affiliate 212 of the American Philatelic Society.

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Editor's notes

By Al Gore

Visit Lulu.com

I would like to thank Howard Richoux for his article on Lulu.com. If the idea of publishing anything interests you, I strongly recommend you visit the Web site to see the possibilities. As the article mentions, you can allow Lulu.com to sell your product. In addition to books, they offer other products such as calendars and other specialized print projects. I also hope to have a software review from Howard in the next issue.

Online exhibitions – good or bad?

In this issue, there is also an article on Exponet, an online philatelic exhibition repository. In our last issue, we have a brief article on "The Digital Philatelic Show" at Postage Stamp Mega-Event show in early October in New York City. Exhibits seem to be a big activity at many shows.

In the October 30th issue of *Linn's Stamp News*, Michael Schreiber in his Open Album column makes the comment after viewing online exhibits at the above show that "Most collectors who travel to a stamp show go to buy stamps and covers, though some go to sell. Relatively few go to a show to look at the exhibits — even when they are real. When the exhibits are electronic, you would expect even fewer to want to take a look."

I found the comment very interesting particularly since it came from the editor of *Linn's*. I am not an exhibitor but the exhibiting crowd do seem to make a big deal about the event with the lots of awards and a banquet. When I see news regarding shows it seems to focus on who won awards for their exhibits rather than comments on collectors browsing at a dealer booth. At Washington 2006, it was about seeing the best of the best.

I recall reading a comment that Ken Lawrence posted in the VSC's forums that without exhibits many of the major shows would be doomed. There has also been the question of authenticity of some material illustrated in electronic only submissions since it obviously easy to include almost anything since you just need a scan of the item and actually have the actual item in the exhibit. Will online exhibits have any major effect to the exhibiting crowd or the hobby overall?

As, as long as an exhibitor does not manufacture material (like phony post marks) and is an educational vehicle to philatelists or specialists, it sounds like a positive move forward. However, I could see online exhibits that no one has seen in physical form more like literature entries (an electronic book) rather than a traditional exhibit. FIP has given up judging Web pages. ☒

Letters to the editor

Any information on Looking Glass?

I'm a member from way back # 428. Could you please help me? In your July 1992 issue Vol 3 No 3 you write about a Program by the name of "Looking Glass 2.0" I used this program, and liked it very much. In your April 1993 issue, Vol 4, No 2, there was a little update of the program. Could you please tell me if there is an update of "Looking Glass" I could use. And is there a way I could contact the program? Thank you for your time to help me.

Robert R. Weiss
robweiss@adelphia.net

According to Scott Brill, Qi Software and Consulting, a Windows based version is on the "backburner as it is very expensive to develop and launch a product such as this." However, they will put anyone on the mailing list for future updates by sending their email address to qisoft@ix.netcom.com. Their Web site is home.netcom.com/~qisoft/lookglass.html

Stamp dimensions needed

I have just purchased Album Pro and need the overall sizes of stamps. I am setting up an album for King George VI of Africa and Asia. Do you know of a source to get these measurements? Maybe some member has them and would be willing to share them? I would appreciate your comments.

George Hess #1558
HESSJRG@aol.com

I am not aware of any general listing with stamp dimensions. It is difficult to find even a listing of issues for many countries in a standard format. The best place I have seen for just listings is Ray Knauss's www.stampcat.com. He has collection files intended for import into his inventory program but they can be opened in Microsoft Excel. I contributed the US files. The US original files (from the WPID work) was complete to the early 90's and had many errors.

You should also post this question on the PCSG Web site or the VirtualStampclub.com Web site to see if can find others with similar interests. For the benefit of everyone else, if you do compile something, please consider contributing it to PCSG Web site for use by others.

Looking for anyone to assist in scanning project

I have done many scans to accumulate a 7,500+ stamp image collection of hunting and fishing stamps, but that is the subject of another article. What I am asking for here is whether there are any members (or friends) with an interest in the subject of scanning pages of stamps and breaking them out into single images. I have attacked the problem several times in the last 5 years and have reasonably

solved it for my personal needs. My entire collection resides in various 3-ring binders on the black stock sheets of varying row counts depending on needs.

I have decently fast algorithms to figure out what is black background and what is stamp and identify the location of each stamp on the page and extract it to the screen or separate files. What I have discovered is that the general problem of stamps on other colored pages is not so easy to analyze by the same techniques. My source code (in Delphi) is not clean and shareable (I am perfectly willing to share, but it is just woven too deeply into my massive code libraries and would be too painful for others to look at and try to reuse.) I finally have enough good tools that I should be able to share with others on the EXE level.

In the longer run, I am fascinated by the idea of measuring perforations automatically. I don't think that watermarking would be possible, mainly because it would be too difficult to get the initial scans. I have always liked the concept of using the computer as a large magnifying glass to look for engraving varieties. It is so much more comfortable to view a screen than to hunch over a microscope.

I intend to write an article for the next issue on the subject of scanning stamps and dealing with the results, but, in the meantime, I would like to find a few people interested in testing what I have currently and discussing possible solutions for the general case.

Howard Richoux #1000
howard@hnrsoft.com

Comments on last president's message

I can tell some of my observations. I don't care how you cut it, it was a mistake not to have a booth in Washington. I'm active with the Society for Hungarian Philately and our experiences both at San Francisco and in Washington was very fruitful. Ten years ago in San Francisco we've signed up 14 new members and in Washington we signed 17 new members.

Regarding the Digital Philatelic Exhibition at the MEGA Show, I'm a seasoned exhibitor and I know that the rules for digital exhibiting will 'shake out' in the future. However, I would not enter such exhibit like this MEGA Show where the ASDA takes the right for all future duplication and marketing. That is going too far! I personally would not give up the rights to my exhibit (marketing yes).

WPID universal catalogue: I was one of the contributors when Lois de Violini organized and worked on the project. This is a mind boggling size project but because

(Continued on page 78)

An interview with Bob Allen about www.1847usa.com

by Al Gore, editor@pcsg.org

If you have not seen www.1847usa.com, I highly recommend it. Even if you are not a US specialist, there is a lot to see and learn. The Web site is an excellent repository for basic information on United States issues from the initial 1847 issues to 1970. A sample Web page is shown in figure 1.

For most issues there is basic stamp information including Scott Catalogue numbers, an image, and first day information. For older issues, additional details about plate varieties, watermarks, perforations, paper types, and other information that can only be found by having multiple specialist reference books. It is available online and an easy to navigate format at www.1847usa.com.

I especially like the section on Washington-Franklins with a methodical procedure to determine the correct catalogue number with clear color images of the different type characteristics for this series.

For this article, I asked Bob Allen, senior editor, some questions about the Web site.

Why did you start www.1847usa.com?

There are several reasons for putting an identifier of U.S. stamps on the Internet. To mention just a few, the Web provides an easy search function, it enables color as a standard and inexpensive option, and it allows simple updates to reflect new information and discoveries, all costly and difficult in the publication of a book. Perhaps more importantly, the Internet allows hyperlinks, making possible navigation that is simply impossible with printed media. In particular, it enables a flowchart-like solution to difficult problems, affording links with one simple mouse click. This was of prime consideration when creating the Washington Franklin identifier.

Possibly the largest impediments to growth are bandwidth and the obtainment of reference images. In many cases, the more affordable proofs have been substituted, and although they work nearly as well for identification purposes, they fall a little short aesthetically.

The sheer volume of new stamps issued by the USPS over the last twenty-five years is daunting. At this time, I have no plans of going beyond 1970 for the U.S. commemoratives, although I will probably provide identifiers for the Americana, Transportation and Great American Series, along with an identifier by denomination for the regular issues.

Finally, anyone who has spent any time writing is well aware of the difficulty in editing their own work. Fortu-

nately, many readers have been kind enough to point these errors out. As new information surfaces and is brought to our attention updates are made. It will be only through the help of fellow U.S. collectors and students of our stamps that a more complete and accurate picture will emerge.

The information on the 1847USA Web site is basic in nature and not meant to replace any of the various journals that are available. In fact, we do all we can to encourage the building of a reference literature collection and to encourage the reader to purchase a copy of the Scott U.S. Specialized Catalogue.

If, in some small way, the site kindles interest in our country's stamps, the effort has been worthwhile. The joy of working on the site has provided its own reward and watching the number of visitors grow over the years has brought much satisfaction.

In the mid-nineties my interest in stamp collecting was rekindled. I bought a few small lots over the Internet and was interested in identifying individual stamps, so I bought a brand new copy of the 1998 Scott U.S. Specialized. A fantastic reference which has only improved since then, but it still came a little short in identifying many of my stamps. I checked and re-checked the Internet and my local library and could not find supplementary identifiers. My primary interest was in identifying stamps prior to about 1930 and, naively I suppose, decided that since there were only about 150 or so different designs, an identifier, supplemental to the Scott catalog, would not be that hard to put together and just might prove useful to other collectors as well. The site has grown primarily in response to requests from readers of the site.

Although there is much interest in current U.S. issues, I believe the line will be drawn at 1970. There is, of course, much more interest in the value of the stamps, and this is an area that I have absolutely no interest in addressing. Scott does a very good job with this, in particular now that they are publishing their Valuing Supplement, and along with PSE's Stamp Market Quarterly, I think the topic of value is well covered.

Are you doing it essentially alone?

If you have read any of the articles on the site you may have noticed the use of the royal "we" (I will dispense of the use here so as not to confuse the issue). That is not to say that I am building the site entirely on my own, since I rely heavily on input from my, primarily, very appreciative readers, not to mention the incredible variety of reference material available. I had no idea when I started that

philately had more literature than any other hobby and perhaps more than all other hobbies combined.

What Web authoring tools do you use?

I work on several other commercial Web sites, which I prefer remain anonymous. I use FrontPage merely to aid with the coding, since I use a lot of tables. Although not everyone loves tables, I find it helps me to keep track of image placement and links quite nicely. FrontPage also provides a front end for file management and I have found this useful as well. I haven't really taken more than a cursory look at CSS and am treating HTML creation along the lines of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it". I primarily use existing pages as templates for new pages.

Files are uploaded using a standard FTP program and not through FrontPage's publishing feature, which I have found to be of more trouble than help, particularly when I change providers or update my PC. Besides, FTP is in general much, much faster.

What challenges did you face to create this work?

The main challenges are finding the time to do the research and then to put everything into HTML, the same challenges every author encounters. Bandwidth is always a big concern. If I had deeper pockets I would get the reference stamps for rarer items for images to make identification even easier for than novice.

Can you elaborate on your collecting interests, club, and show activity?

I really don't actually collect much of anything anymore. Basically, my interests are in any reference that makes identifying U.S. stamps easier, primarily for the non-specialist. I am not in a position of great mobility and therefore am unable to attend stamp functions. My participation in the hobby is primarily through email.

Who is your ISP?

My ISP is www.digitalflare.com and they have been very reliable, with nearly 100% up time. My registrar is dotster and I have had no problems, so have not changed.

Is your Web site hard coded (just links from page to page) or does it use some databases?

It is strictly hard-coded.☒

Washington Head: Denomination in Numerals: 1¢ Stamps with Unusual Perforations



Offset Perf 12.5 x 12.5
Scott 536 - Rosback Perfs



Rotary Perf 11 x 10
Scott 538



Rotary Perf 10 x 11
Scott 542

Note: These are typically centered examples of the one cent Washington stamps with Rosback or compound perforations, better centered copies bring a substantial premium.

Unusual or Compound Perforations on the 1¢ Stamp Allowing Immediate Identification:

Perforation	Method of Printing	Watermark	Scott Number	Size of Frame	Fakes can be made from
Perf 12 X 10	Flat Plate	single-line	423A (formerly 424a)	19 x 22 mm	408, 424
Perf 10 X 12	Flat Plate	single-line	423D (formerly 424b)	19 x 22 mm	408, 424
Perf 12.5	Offset	none	536	19 x 22 mm	531
Perf 11 X 10	Rotary Press	none	538	19.5-20 x 22 mm (wider)	490
Perf 10 X 11	Rotary Press	none	542	19 x 22.5 mm (taller)	486

Figure 1. Typical Washington-Franklin issue identifier Web page

The Latest on the APS Elections

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virtualstampclub.com

Preview of Microsoft Excel 2007's new user interface

by Bill Sharpe, billsharpe@adelphia.net

Office 2007 represents a significant change in the way Microsoft presents the various elements of its suite to users. There are no menu commands as such – the menu has been replaced with a series of tabs. Clicking on a tab heading brings up a ribbon with a group of commands appropriate for the tab heading. Figure 1 shows the ribbon associated with the data tab in Excel 2007.

Ribbons take up a fair amount of real estate on your screen but you can hide the ribbon by using the Ctr-F1 keystroke shortcut (hold the Control key down and press the F1 key). The ribbon will reappear when you select another tab heading. If you are a current Office user and you use mouse clicks on menu items you'll have to get used to a new paradigm for selecting choices. However, those who prefer keystroke shortcuts will be happy to know that all the keystroke shortcuts available in earlier versions of Office still work – Ctrl-P still brings up a print dialog box, for example.

Zooming in or out is accomplished more readily now with a horizontal slider on the right side of the information bar at the bottom of the Excel window. You can either drag the vertical bar right or left or click the plus and minus signs at each end.

Excel, of course, is still a suitable program for keeping track of a stamp inventory. The number of rows in each worksheet has been increased from 65,536 to 1,048,576; the number of columns from 256 to 16,384 (that's column XFD instead of IV – most three-letter English words are now also column headings). Access, the Office database

program, has also been improved so that it is now much easier to create and manage a database. My own opinion is that collectors should really move to a database once the quantity of stamps that they are tracking gets high.

All the commands formerly associated with the data menu now are displayed on the data tab. These include commands to get external data, manage connections, sort and filter, data tools, outline, and analysis. Tool tips appear as you hover your mouse over the various commands.

I loaded my existing computer stamps spreadsheet into Excel 2007, which opened in compatibility mode, meaning primarily that the maximum size of the spreadsheet still was limited to 65,536 rows and 256 columns. Information in this spreadsheet is provided in a table format with the header row showing names for the data provided in each column corresponding to field names in a database. The rules for working with tables in Excel are that you cannot have an entirely empty row or empty column in your data cells.

Figure 2 shows the spreadsheet with a filter applied to show only the stamps in the list issued by the United States. You can apply multiple filter criteria such as displaying stamps issued in a single year with a price paid greater than \$1. The usual sorting options are also available with ascending or descending sorts obtained on a single column by clicking on the A-Z or Z-A icons. You can also sort based on multiple selections by clicking on the Sort text below these icons.

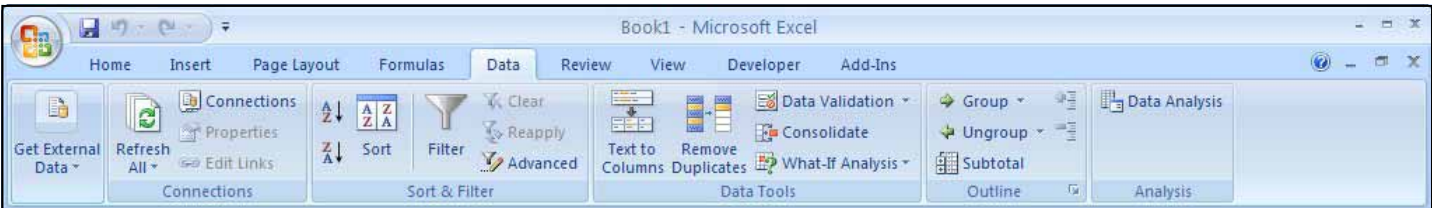


Figure 1. Microsoft Excel's new ribbon style interface

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Country	Catalog Number	Subject	Year Issued	Date Acquired	Price Paid
21	United States	UX53	Punched Card	1965	3/15/66	\$0.50
22	United States	1501	Printed Circuit	1973	1/4/74	\$0.25
23	United States	1502	Vacuum Tube	1973	1/16/74	\$0.25
24	United States	UC55	Magnetic Tape	1982	3/15/83	\$0.25
25	United States	2251	Binary Code	1987	5/15/87	\$0.25
26	United States	2630	Video Terminal	1992	3/15/94	\$0.50

Figure 2. Excel worksheet of stamps with computer stamp topic with filter applied for United States issues only

Options are also provided to convert text to a table and to remove duplicate records from your table.

There are many other improvements in Excel 2007, such as better-looking charts, style choices, and specialized cell formats.

A beta version of the Office 2007 programs was available for free download earlier this summer. As of August Microsoft instituted a nominal charge for downloading. This is a beta program and should not be installed on a machine that you use for everyday work. Betas are programs still in development and may contain bugs that cause problems.

I installed Office 2007 on my laptop machine and discovered that my Office 2000 programs then became disabled. Excel 2007 has closed unexpectedly a couple of times but my computer hasn't frozen and I haven't lost any data. I have not had any problems with Word 2007, but I haven't played with Word nearly as much as with Excel.

The beta programs expire March 31, 2007, at which time Microsoft says they will have "reduced functionality," probably meaning that new files cannot be created after that date and that existing files cannot be modified. You can, however, save files in Office 97-2003 format so that they will work with current Office versions. Of course you cannot save your program in the older format with any of the new features of Office 2007, such as the increased spreadsheet size.

The beta download includes the full suite of Office programs and was available at www.microsoft.com/office/preview/beta/overview.msp as of mid-September.

You will need Windows XP Service Pack 2 or Windows Server 2003 as your operating system, 2 GB of free disk space for installation, and a broadband Internet connection to download and install the program files. These are large files; if you don't have a broadband connection you can order the programs on a CD from Microsoft.

There's an informative Excel 2007 blog at <http://blogs.msdn.com/excel/default.aspx> that provides a

lot of information about Excel. Figure 3 shows a portion of the entry for September 20. You can find other entries by going to the site, then either clicking on highlighted dates in the calendar on the right, using the search box, or clicking on the indexed listings.

Microsoft also provides an extensive article (40 printed pages) at the MSDN site, <http://msdn2.microsoft.com/en-us/library/aa730921.aspx>, that describes techniques that you can use as you design and create worksheets to improve calculation performance in Excel 2007. Since worksheets can now be 1000 times larger than the size provided in previous versions of Excel, it's important to understand how to speed up calculations.

You may also want to refer to my article in the July 2006 issue of TC on validating data entries. This article was written for Excel 2003 and earlier versions. There I mentioned a seven-page document, "Using Excel as a Database," referenced at <http://www.und.nodak.edu/dept/cndtrain/Excel/database.pdf>. Use this article as a starting point if you are unfamiliar with setting up an inventory table in any version of Excel.

You can also find much additional information by doing a Google or other Internet search on "Excel as a database."✉

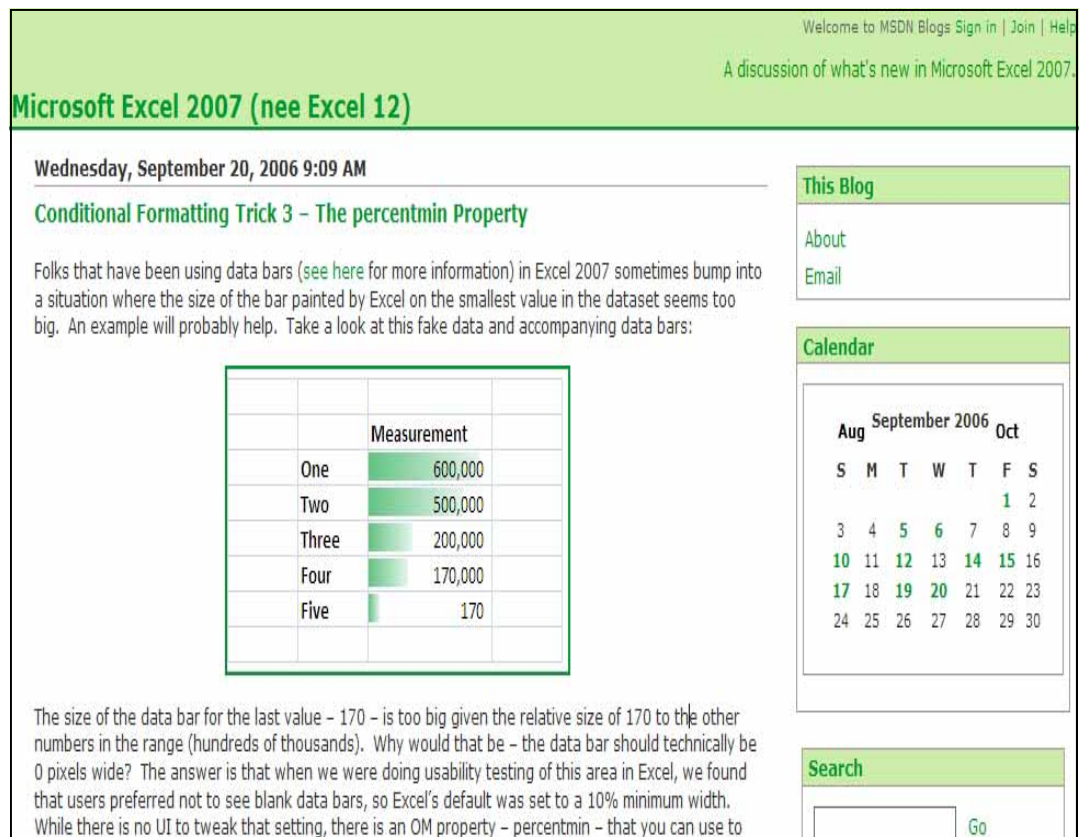


Figure 3. MSDN blog for information on Excel 2007

Philatelic exhibitions on online at EXPONET

by Milan Cernik, icernik@volny.cz

EXPONET (<http://www.japhila.cz/hof/>) is a virtual non-competitive philatelic exhibition with 85 online world-wide exhibits from all time periods. EXPONET is a site where you can present your virtual postal history and philatelic collection. It's intended as a public display of high quality exhibits from different philatelic areas and time's periods. It's written in English, French and German, Spanish, and other languages.

The aim of EXPONET's organizers is to provide a permanent presentation of high quality stamps and philatelic exhibits and to facilitate an online study for visitors throughout the world.

We don't intend to compete with traditional classical exhibits. Our intention is to enable an online viewing to everybody, regardless of distance. Thus take part in the support and promotion of philately.

Who are the organizers of the EXPONET?

The organizers are private individuals (alphabetically):

1. Milan Cernik, collector of postal stationery, exhibitor and philatelic auctioneer at www.pac-auction.com
2. Bretislav Janik, philatelic journalist (AIJP), webmaster of the daily philatelic magazine Japhila www.japhila.cz and former Secretary of the Organization committee of World Postage Stamps Exhibition PRAGA 1988 (Czechoslovakia)
3. Vit Vanicek, vice-president of the Union of the Czech Philatelists and President of the Organizations Committee of World Postage Stamps Exhibition PRAGA 2008.

How was this website founded?

It was founded by private organizers. In the future, we may seek support from philatelic sponsors (merchants)

appearing on the initial pages of EXPONET, not from individual exhibitors. Possibly from small voluntary contributions. The major expenses including rental of space, scanning, and programming is today covered by our hobby and enthusiasm.



Figure 1. Exponet homepage sorts exhibits by contributor's home country

EXPONET VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL PHILATELIC EXHIBITION				
EXPONET IS A PLACE YOU MAY USE TO PRESENT YOUR VIRTUAL POSTAL HISTORY AND PHILATELIC COLLECTION. IT IS INTENDED AS A PUBLIC DISPLAY OF GOOD, VERY GOOD AND HIGH QUALITY EXHIBITS OF ALL PHILATELIC AREAS AND TIME PERIODS IN ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH OR OTHER LANGUAGES... THE AIM OF THE ORGANIZERS OF EXPONET IS TO PROVIDE A PERMANENT PRESENTATION OF HIGH QUALITY STAMP AND PHILATELIC EXHIBITS SO AS TO FACILITATE ON-LINE STUDY FOR VISITORS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WE DO NOT INTEND TO COMPETE WITH TRADITIONAL CLASSICAL EXHIBITS, BUT RATHER TO ENABLE ON-LINE VIEWING TO EVERYBODY, REGARDLESS OF DISTANCE, AND THUS TAKE PART IN THE SUPPORT AND PROPAGATION OF PHILATELY...				
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA				
EXHIBITORS or ANONYMOUS PERSONS / POSSIBLE EXHIBITOR'S WEB PAGE'S:				
USA	AUSTRIA - THE 1945 VIENNA PROVISIONAL ISSUES CARRIGAN Jay T., HENDERSONVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	WEB PAGE	E-MAIL	
USA	GERMANY - SOVIET ZONE 1945 - 1946, MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN THE 1945 ANTI-FASCIST ISSUE OF MECKLENBURG-VORPOMMERN CARRIGAN Jay T., HENDERSONVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	WEB PAGE	E-MAIL	
USA	GERMANY - THE NETZSCHKAU LOCAL ISSUE OF 1945 CARRIGAN Jay T., HENDERSONVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	WEB PAGE	E-MAIL	
USA	LOCAL EMERGENCY MEASURES IN EASTERN HUNGARY, 1944 - 45 CARRIGAN Jay T., HENDERSONVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	WEB PAGE	E-MAIL	
USA	CERTIFIED MAIL IN NORTHERN BAVARIA, 1945 CARRIGAN Jay T., HENDERSONVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	WEB PAGE	E-MAIL	
USA	GERMANY - EAST SAXONY 1945 - 1946 CARRIGAN Jay T., HENDERSONVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	WEB PAGE	E-MAIL	
USA	GERMANY - LOCAL PROVISIONAL ISSUES AFTER WW-II CARRIGAN Jay T., HENDERSONVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	WEB PAGE	E-MAIL	
USA	SCOUT POST, RUSSIAN DISPLACED PERSONS (DP) CAMPS (AMERICAN ZONE) CARRIGAN Jay T., HENDERSONVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	WEB PAGE	E-MAIL	
USA	CARPATHO-UKRAINE 1944 - 45 POSTAL STATIONERY CARRIGAN Jay T., HENDERSONVILLE, NC, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	WEB PAGE	E-MAIL	
USA	ST. VINCENT - A PHILATELIC SAMPLER ELIAS Peter C., UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	-	E-MAIL	
USA	DIE WIEDERAUFNAHME DES AUSLANDSPOSTVERKEHRS IN DEUTSCHLAND 1945 - 1949 FARRER Walter, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	-	E-MAIL	

Figure 2. Partial list of exhibits by United States contributors

When was this website started?

JAPHILA, the online daily magazine was started on May 17th 1999 - (rewarded as a FIP 3-Star site in 2000).

EXPONET – the virtual philatelic exhibition was started on July 2nd 2004. EXPONET is now an integral part of the philatelic web site JAPHILA. Currently it has been enjoyed by 1.7 million visitors! Now we prepare the direct domain by the name "Exponet".

You say that EXPONET is daily visited by 450 visitors. How come that the side-counter adds about 1000 visits daily?

It's rather easy to explain. Every computer has its individual IP address when it's online. So, EXPONET is

daily visited by about 450 different persons from world-wide. Dependent on that EXPONET is so large, many or them visit EXPONET several times a day, or several days a week. It's impossible to view all EXPONET at one time; it would take many hours nonstop. So the difference between the number of access and visitors depends on repeated visits. It works the same way on all Web sites according to Internet ethics. Please notice, the counter of the individual sites has been added one year after the start of the EXPONET. On newly added exhibits, the counter is added from the very first day. By the way, we got a serious remark that so many exhibits and so much of interesting material are stressful for the visitors.

Do the exhibitors pay any charges?

No. In the future, 2007 or 2008 and later we hope for voluntary contributions on a yearly basis (a single payment for as many as 5 or even more exhibits).

Must the exhibitors enter a formal agreement of any kind?

No. Agreement to exhibit by e-mail or by sending a CD with the exhibit is enough. We can also download your exhibits from any destination as ftp or www server.

Can the exhibitors withdraw their exhibits whenever they wish to? Unfortunately, yes.

For how long time does a submitted exhibit remain on the website? Indefinitely if desired.

Can a guarantee of anonymity be given to an exhibitor if desired?

Yes, within the framework of a gentlemen's agreement and cooperation between the exhibitor and the management of EXPONET. At present, the name of the exhibitor will only be known to us (Cernik, Janik and Vanicek) and the exhibit will be labeled as "Anonymous".

Is an exhibitor's text protected by copyright?

On behalf of the EXPONET management yes, otherwise not. Possible violation of copyright by other persons must be pursued by the exhibitor in accordance with the applicable law.

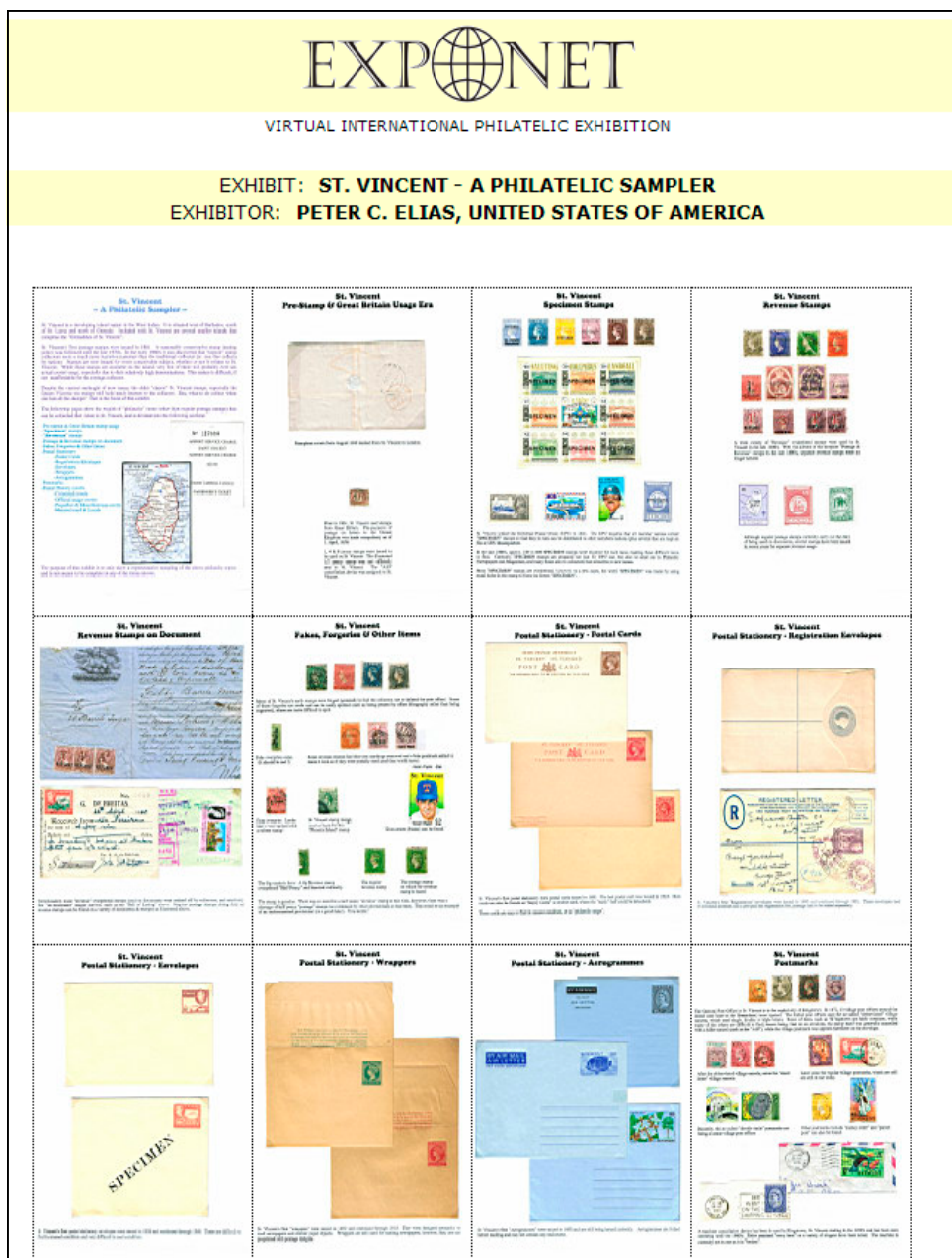


Figure 3. Partial view of single frame exhibit by PCSC's Peter Elias. View individual pages by selecting image.

(Continued on page 70)

Is it a risk that the EXPONET will undermine the classic exhibitions?

No, we don't believe that. A classic exhibition isn't only a show; it's primarily a social matter and a place to establish connections between collectors. EXPONET can't compete with that. Also there is no rivalry, it's a mutual complement.

On a classic exhibition you are able to manage 5 to 10 exhibits, more than that is too many. On EXPONET you can anytime see the philately treasures, see them in peace and quiet at home, then visit a classic exhibition and there thoroughly study it.

Even if you can enlarge the stamps in your computer, and be able to print them; a virtual stamp show still can't compensate a possibility to see original stamps.

What kind of criteria is needed to exhibit on the Internet?

It's important that the exhibit is interesting, has a good quality and has some philatelic value. It's no problem to show a good exhibit which so far hasn't been exhibited or awarded.

Contrariwise we don't accept an exhibit which isn't well worked through - even if it has been awarded on some exhibition.

It's also very important the scan quality of the exhibit is good, made with high resolution, so it's possible to study particular stamps. It's incorrect to use a protection film over the sheets when scanned. Unfortunately it happens that all these parameters are impossible to perform.

For example, we couldn't refuse rare classic Argentina with 558 sheets just because the owner used a protection film over the sheets when scanned. This made some scans too light, some too dark, some too glance, but the high quality of the exhibit is in this case more important than the technical specifications. You can view this exhibit on EXPONET.

We don't limit the size of the exhibition. On EXPONET you can find one-frame exhibits, some with only 9 sheets, contra the 22 frame large exhibition by E. Pietschmann „Tschechoslowakei - Die 1. Republik (1918-1938) im Spiegel ihrer Briefmarken“. The already mentioned Argentina exhibit has as many as 35 frames with 558 sheets. It would be a pity not to show such a rare exhibition.

The optimal size of the exhibition is 5 to 10 frames, according to the FIP regulations and regulations of APS in USA.

EXPONET is still at its very beginning. We prepare numerous of changes. One of them will be classification of the exhibits.

Exhibits which have achieved high awards at national and international shows will be classified in Hall of Fame.

1. All exhibits will be classified in three groups.
2. Hall of Fame
3. Very fine and outstanding exhibition
4. Open Class for exhibits having achieved Bronze, new exhibits, youth exhibits, etc.

We will continue to cooperate with FIP jurors and FIP national commissioners, such as Henry Hahn - USA, Jay T. Carrigan - USA, Rene Jacobsohn - CH, Lumir Brendl - CZ and many others. Our purpose is to get support from various FIP officials to select the best exhibits. Next aim is to popularize philately mainly among young internet users and among the non-philatelic public.

In the future we are prepared to present hundreds of worldwide exhibits, all topics and from all time periods. We intend an online voting and once per year expert judging by electronically connected jurors. We harbor great desires at the cost of valuable time and technical effort, toward their realization. We consider it possible that the EXPONET in the future will be revised to include searching translation into various languages, etc. At present EXPONET has a capacity of nearly 3 GB, though we intend to expand it to 15 or 30Gb. Time will tell whether our visions and good intentions will be realized.

An invitation

To begin with we want to invite you to a high quality show at Exponet. In next phase we are searching support from national commissioners and members of national philatelist federations to cooperate with Exponet.

Exhibitors please send us your exhibitions to a permanent show. Together we can make Exponet to a large virtual philatelist show with dignity. This way we can document rare exhibitions, even if only in virtual form, before they get sold or for some reason destroyed.

Let's build up a permanent treasury of study material and an educating help to young people and beginners. Let your philatelic treasures catch the interest of the philatelic community. Let's show them what we can. EXPONET has come to stay.✉

Be your own book publisher at LuLu.com

by Howard Richoux, howard@hnrsoftware.com

This is a bit premature, since I have not completed the publishing project, but the concept and samples are so good, I felt that I had to share my experiences. My orientation has always been to PC-based stamp cataloging – local and website, but the traditional printed catalog has a lot of benefits, mainly that it doesn't require a computer science degree to use it, or an outlet to plug into.

My projects are oriented to hunting and fishing stamps – most people have heard of duck stamps – I head a little farther into the wilderness with trout and turkey stamps, and things even more obscure. Much of the cataloging still needs to be done, and that is half the fun for me.

Characteristics of a printed stamp catalog are: a lot of tabular data, as many illustrations as can be fit in, color if possible, user-friendly binding (lays flat), able to be easily revised and updated, and priced low enough for collectors to afford it. It is possible, although not easy, to lay it out in a word processing program such as WordPerfect, but printing, binding and distribution is difficult. About 10 years ago, I self-published a small (60-70 page) catalog, printed it on my laser printer, punched the pages for plastic comb binding and threaded them onto all those teeth, and eventually produced and sold about 50 copies. I resolved to find a better way for the next project.

My daughter pointed me to a website called LuLu.com, (see figure 1) whose specialty is book self-publishing with on-demand printing. I'm not sure of the hardware magic involved, but it takes a PDF file of pages and a couple of image files for front and back cover art and produces single copies of books, on demand, out the other end. Given the pricing, I can't imagine that there is a human involved at any point in the process, except maybe to put the book in a shipping box and put the label on it.

The author/publisher does everything online at absolutely no up-front cost. If no copies of the book are ever ordered or sold, you don't pay a single penny. The publishing project involves about 5 or 6 screens of steps to select the options and upload the page and cover files. I have a few quibbles with some of the

steps, but overall, it is pretty easy. Refer to figure 2 for pricing examples

As a test project, I have taken the first volume of a friend's stamp catalog, produced with WordPerfect, which uses a very small font to get the maximum amount of data into the stamp tables and has many color stamp images – generally 200 dpi JPG files. This volume is about 120 pages, and will probably be 140 before it is ready to publish.

The print quality of the color pages is at least as good as my Scott's Specialized 2005, very sharp even with the extremely small font. Stamp images are crisp and readable. The paper is good quality, and thick enough that there is virtually no ghosting of the other side of the paper. Although LuLu implies that a black and white book should be produced from a PDF file with black and white images, the color PDF produces a fine black and white printed book as well. Note – the 120 page book is a 200 megabyte file, so it does take a little time to upload to LuLu.

(Continued on page 72)



Figure 1. LuLu.com invites you to create your own books fast, easy, and at reasonable prices for even low volumes. You can sell through LuLu.com as well.

(Continued from page 71)

One of the first technical hurdles in producing the catalog was that Word Perfect (and MS Word also) does not have a way of directly producing a PDF file. Fortunately there are quite a few free or low cost programs on the internet that will perform this function. They install as if they were printers, so it is very straightforward to print your document on your local printer and then print it again to a pdf file. I chose DocuPrinter LT from Neevia at \$19 – there were other programs that were free elsewhere.

(Editor's Note: We had reviews of several free PDF generation print utilities in the October 2005 issue of TC.)

The toughest problem I faced was preparing the front and back covers. It is possible to use covers prepared using a template on the LuLu site, but these are just slightly better than no cover at all. What LuLu wants is a JPG file for each cover at 300 dots per inch at a size that is slightly larger than the 8 ½ by 11 cover size.

I eventually solved this with another printer driver utility – ZAN Image Printer. This utility generates a TIFF, JPEG,

or BMP file. For details, go to www.zan1011.com. Although I wrote my own programs to lay out the cover, I could have prepared the cover in a Word Processor and printed it to the ZAN printer as a 300 dpi JPG. Cover layout is a bit tricky since the image gets stretched a bit to go all the way to the edges and it is easy to get images or text too close to the borders to look good. The final cover is shown in figure 2.

Ignoring the manuscript creation time and the cover design time, the actual time spent putting the printing together on LuLu was about 3 hours, and most of that was trying to figure out what the choices I was making actually meant. My actual cash outlay to LuLu is \$48.82 for 2 copies of the book mailed to the author and me, at \$21.93 each printing cost and about \$2.50 each for mailing separately. I have purchased two PC-based utility programs – one printer-driver for producing PDFs and one for printing to JPG. I could have used a free PDF printer, but this one had some additional flexibility that might be useful later. Total expenditure for the software was about \$50.

Thus, my total cash outlay for the project was just under \$100, and for this, I have two printed copies of the book in full color. Currently, the project is set up as private, but I could make the book available to the public by changing an option on the LuLu site. At that point, it could be ordered by anyone. The author/publisher can set the retail price at any amount above the printing cost, and the royalties accrue in an account for the author. ☐

Lulu.com book costs (as of October 2006)

Single book pricing

Base Price:	\$4.53 - this would be the cost of a Zero-page book
Interior Color:	\$0.15/page- a book is ALL B&W pages or ALL Color pages
Interior B&W:	\$0.02/page

Example book costs for 100 page, perfect bound for quantity 1 and 100

B&W book: $\$4.53 + 100 * \$0.02 = \$6.53$ (100 books: \$4.87/ea)
Color book : $\$4.53 + 100 * \$0.15 = \$19.53$ (100 books: \$17.03/ea)

- All books include full-color covers
- A page is a printed side, 2 pages per piece of paper

Available Sizes

6" x 9" - Novel
8.5" x 11" - U.S. Letter
7.5" x 7.5" - Square
6.625" x 10.25" - Comic Book
9" x 7" - Landscape
6.14" x 9.21" - Royal
7.44" x 9.68" - Crown Quarto
8.27" x 11.69" - A4
4.25" x 6.875" - Pocket size

Binding Options

Coil bound
Saddle stitched
Perfect bound

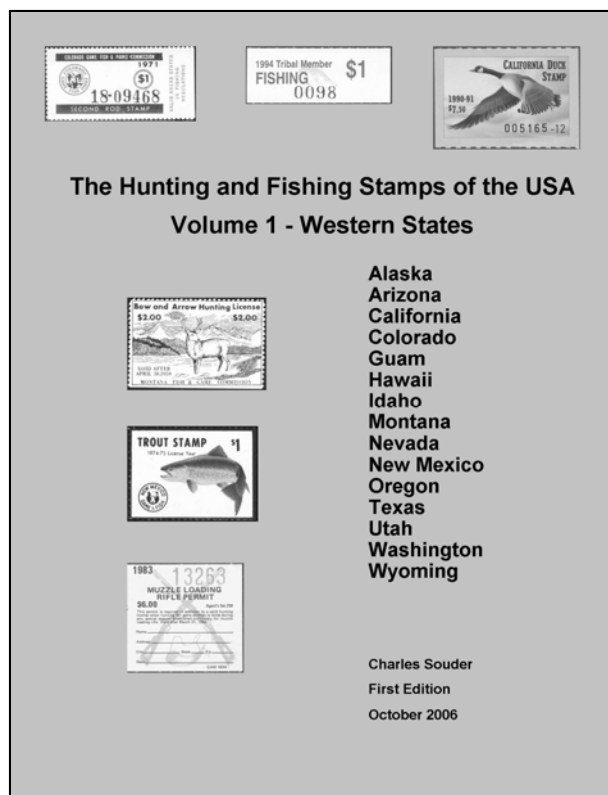


Figure 3. Author's generated book cover. Lulu requires cover to be in JPG format

Figure 2. Example book costs

Time saving tips for the computing philatelist

By Al Gore, editor@pcsg.org

Managing long URL's

How often have you seen something on the Web and you wanted to send someone a link but ended up with a link is often very long (40 to 50 characters) or worse yet received an email with a very long URL and line wrapped? It is not often easy to paste these links in your browser with one action. This often happens with links from youtube.com, a MapQuest reference, an eBay auction lot, or some other web page link down several layers in a Web site.

There is a free easy way to get short URL's at **Tiny-URL.com**. You simply go to TinyURL Web site, paste in the link, select the create button, and your long URL will look something like <http://tinyurl.com/yy50lc>. I created this URL from the YouTube URL <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NI5Ep2GbeBY> (Mr Rogers visits the USPS). The added benefit is that this URL shortcut never expires! You can also use it to just shorten your own web site such as <http://www.my-internet-isp.com/~myusername>. There is also a browser plug-in (requires enabling Javascript support in your browser) that allows one click creation of URL's without visiting the web site as well.

The TinyURL service is a free service but does accept donations via PayPal or Amazon Honor System.

Windows dialog box, folder navigation enhancers

Microsoft Windows has not made it easy to get to specific files or folders with a minimum of clicks. For example, if you are preparing an e-mail and wanted to attach a specific file, you have to navigate the Windows dialog box structure to navigate to the folder to find the specific file. Most applications always default to a directory (usually not the one you want) so you spend time going through the physical folder structure.

In more recent releases of Microsoft Windows and Office, Microsoft has added the "My Places" to Folders view but this is only a partial solution. These improvements are not available in all applications since these do not follow Microsoft's GUI standards. I usually want quick access to the same directories or files over time so I need something that gives me nearly one click access to specific files or folders.

I use Hyperionics', www.hyperionics.com, free FileBox eXtender. This program will not work with Microsoft Vista. Since I am not upgrading anytime soon so it is still great for me but also do not expect any support bug fixes. This program offers several very convenient functions. First, it adds an icon to the system tray. When you click this icon you get a

window that provides a list of folders or files. When you click the item on the list, you immediately open the folder or open the file with the associated application.

FileBox Extenders add 4 icons next to the standard Windows help and close icons in dialog boxes. The left most icon (clock) opens a view that shows recently used folders. The next icon (heart) opens a customizable view listing favorite drives, folders, and files as shown in figure 1. The next icon (Up arrow) collapses the window to just the Windows title bar and the push pin makes the window stay on top of other windows.

The push pin is very handy to type information from one window to another when copy/paste does not work. This eliminates resizing Windows.

This program does not work with all programs particularly those that do not use the traditional Windows GUI (windows with title bar) such as Adobe Photoshop Elements.

Favorites customization and handling of misbehaving programs are handled in the configuration screens as shown in figure 2.✉

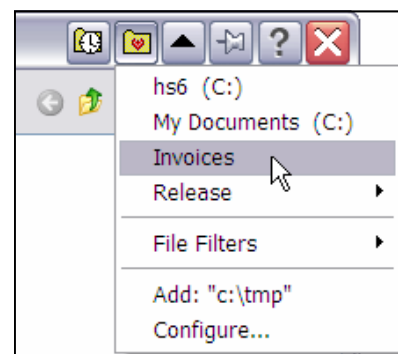


Figure 1. Customized favorites view when you click on heart folder in File Open, Save, or Browse dialog boxes



Figure 2. Configuration menu

PCSG future....

(Continued from page 61)

they use in furtherance of their hobby enjoyment ... large articles, small articles, illustrations, tip ... you name it.

Volunteers to help out at major stamp shows for recruiting efforts and just to answer questions. We don't seek experts ... you do not need to be a national-level exhibitor who wears a propeller beanie to qualify. Personally, I have a propeller beanie, but I am not a national-level exhibitor.

Volunteers to offer new ideas for the group. I currently am working on a presentation I hope will be suitable for any stamp club to use as a meeting program, or for a stamp show presentation. But, I am deficient in aspects of that presentation development that others believe should be included. If you have experience in that area, and would like to help, jump right in.

Without an influx of volunteer assistance, we will remain as we are. + Your board of directors has been discussing the PCSG current situation at length. Given the continued net decline in membership over the recent past, the board's inability to attend major shows nor get help at them to promote PCSG, and our inability to maintain (let alone upgrade) the PCSG website, the following three possibilities for the future have emerged:

1. Continue as best we can while actively seeking as much volunteer help as we are able
2. Disband, with any remaining funds to be dispersed per the PCSG bylaws
3. Merge into the Virtual Stamp Club, which maintains an active Web site and message board

None of us wants to see the PCSG go away if we believe there continues to be a role for it within U.S. philately. But, we also see no reason to continue beating what just might be a dead horse.

I will close with one of those journalists' observations that may appear crass, but still is an observation. I remember from my earlier career at both the APS and Scott Publishing—when I was traveling a fair amount to stamp shows and even to visit stamp clubs—there quite a few people I met were proud of being members of dozens of specialty groups and subscribing to all of the major U.S. stamp publications. I really hope that the bulk of the PCSG membership is not made up of those who merely return the annual dues-payment notice with a check and give no further thought to the organization itself.

As always, please send me your comments to dick@dicksine.com.✉

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Creation of a philatelic reference Web site

By Dick Sine, PCSG president, president@pcsg.org

On June 1, 1999, www.askphil.org went live with the goal of providing the type of philatelic reference information not easily available elsewhere. Now more than seven years later, the site has grown to about 38,000-42,000 visitors monthly and e-mail response to an average of 241 individual questions in 2006, up from an average of 227 monthly last year and 125 monthly in 2004. Total monthly visitors are averaging just under 40,000 this year, up from 34,000 in 2005 and 24,000 in 2004. AskPhil has not been an instant success, but has shown steady progress from year to year.

The Concept

Newcomers to philately and others outside “organized philately” did not have an easy place to go with questions. And, even those who have been involved in philately for many years do not know where to take their questions. AskPhil seeks to reduce those numbers.

All too often, we have learned from the thousands of thank you notes to AskPhil, local stamp clubs and specialty groups and even national organizations are perceived to be closed circles. Unfortunate and possibly even erroneous, those seeking help are those who seek out AskPhil.

Idea for the site came from Les Winick, then president of the Collector's Club of Chicago (CCC). He enlisted me to put the concept into play. Les and I had worked together on many projects over the years and this one just appeared natural to both of us. The CCC agreed to sponsor the project, picking up the minimal expenses. That sponsorship enabled the site to get off the ground and continue without financial worries.

Plans were simple: take a chance on what Les and I thought was needed, put the information onto the site, and then watch to see how much it was used. He did the bulk of the non-database content, and I have done the web work. For the most part, we guessed right. There were features we implemented that failed, principal of which was an interactive want-list capability that allowed users to enter their wants. It started strong and continued well for a few months, and then the number of people using the service dropped off to zero. So, we dropped the feature.

In the meantime, our reference material grew steadily:

- a searchable list of dealers now with more than 6,200 names
- a searchable list of specialty groups numbering more than 500
- a searchable list of local stamp clubs numbering more than 1,500
- a searchable list of previously answered questions that is used more than 1,100 times a month.
- a glossary that has grown to more than 30,000 entries and serves as the base of a larger glossary that will be published in print form in 2007.
- 30 how-to articles
- a Washington-Franklin identifier acknowledged by experts to be sound, but yet designed to allow the novice to identify items from that stamp set.

There is a whole lot more – a total of more than 500 web pages – but the above paints a fair picture of the approach.

Executing the Concept

Perhaps the greatest strength of the development process was that the site was built slowly, and with constant

(Continued on page 76)

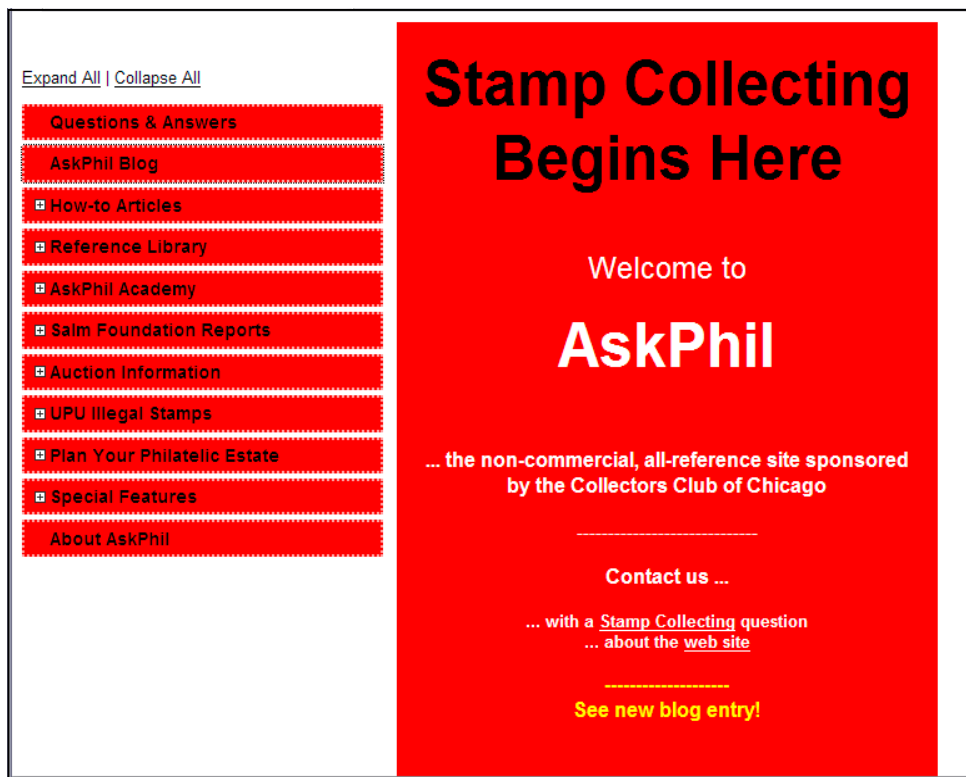


Figure 1. AskPhil's homepage

checking of visitor statistics. While the development side was performed with a minimum of expense, there has been absolutely no money spent on promotion. Everything has been done via news release and word-of-mouth.

Initial development was performed with an HTML writer. Not until about 2001 was the site and its development moved over the Macromedia Dreamweaver. And, even then, a fair amount of current development and maintenance is performed in HTML rather than WYSIWYG mode. The reason is quite simple:

A goal of AskPhil is to provide the user a quick response. Bloated HTML code slows down your browser, so we did not want to promote wasted activity. Dreamweaver is known for its clean code generation. By sticking to that approach, we have been able to keep our page size (number of bytes) to a minimum and, thus, allow us to have some pages containing hundreds of kilobytes that load quite rapidly.

Because I had no experience attaching interactive databases to a Web site, I purchased that service from our web host. I should note, also, that I did not seek out the lowest-priced web hosting I could find. Rather, I went with a firm in a nearby town that is quite reasonable (\$15/month, including email capability) that provides excellent service.

As I reflect on AskPhil's development, I really cannot remember what prompted any of the specific articles and/or sections other than the general belief they would benefit the mission of the site. Likewise, other than the want-list section we ran for months and then delete, I cannot remember why anything else was deleted, or when.

The statistics package that comes with the Web site allows me to pull a monthly report for the sponsor. The web host recently changed the package being used, which now is far more graphical (of no additional benefit to me, but perhaps to others) but does not carry forward per-page visits from month to month. I miss that feature, but not enough to change hosts.

With the e-mailed questions still a major part of AskPhil's mission. AskPhil is non-commercial and, therefore, does not recommend specific firms. When asked about a dealer or a product, we

refer the questioner to our stamp dealer database and how to use it.

All questions are treated as if the response will be re-printed or, more drastically, is some sort of test of our knowledge and/or customer service. Thus, everyone gets a straight answer, without any attempt at humor or sarcasm.

We take nothing for granted. We have learned over the years that a very high percentage of those who send questions are new to philately, have no other connection to philately, or who have no interest in stamp collecting beyond the question being asked, i.e., "I recently inherited a collection and want to sell it."

When asked to value something, if it is not listed in the Scott catalog (where I can use catalog value), I politely decline. Most such requests are from those who find a 40-year-old U.S. stamp in a desk drawer and want to know if it can be used as the down payment on a new car.

We update our databases and other information as we find anything more recent. Many of our database updates

(Continued on page 79)

AskPhil Q & A		
No.	Question	Answer
212	Recently, I purchased a set of Flag Over Porch stamps from a well-known stamp dealer. I noticed that many of the stamps were not on their original self-adhesive backing paper. Are these stamps still considered mint?	AskPhil's own article, " How to Save Self-Adhesive Stamps " refers to a mint variety as being attached to its original backing paper.
213	What is Experimental Linerless Self-Adhesive? And, how can stamps with this characteristic be identified?	These are self-adhesive coil stamps issued without the traditional backing paper. That is, the stamps were available in dispensers, similar to the familiar cellophane tape dispenser, and the stamps literally stuck to each other. Two varieties were issues in 1997, one for pre-sorted first class mail (with a face value of 25 cents) using the Juke Box design and the other a 32-cent Flag Over Porch design. The Scott catalog notes the Juke Box variety has simulated perforations tipped in black at top and bottom and the Flag design shows a color gradation in the lower right different from the other self-adhesives of the same design.
214	I have read several articles on the Flag Over Porch stamps. Each article states a different quantity, in the varieties of this stamp. I myself have counted 23. What reference material can be used to identify all of these varieties?	Use all reference material you can find, and then decide for yourself which "varieties" you want to track and save. You already have seen there is no real agreement when it comes to this material, so put together all you can find and base you collection on your own decision.
475	I have read articles regarding the .32-cent Flag Over Porch Coil Series of issues. I am still confused and do not know how to identify these stamps with	Perhaps the best place for you to start is the AskPhil Resource Library . Specifically, I recommend the article " How to Use a Perforation Gauge ." The other basic articles, however, also may be of assistance to you.

Figure 2. Search results in Q&A database when using "flag over porch" search criteria

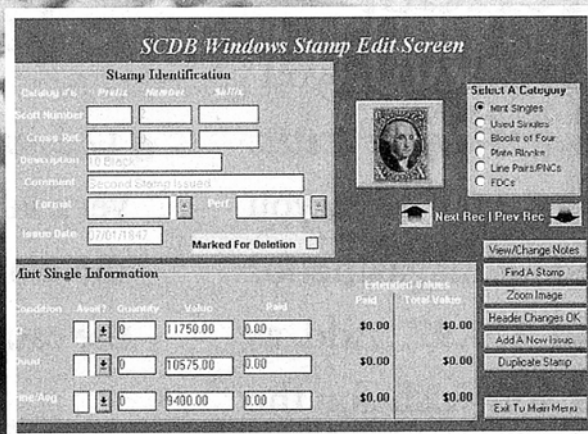
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Cuba Data Base \$5.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Italy Data Base \$25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> United Nations Data Base \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Germany Data Base \$25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Russia Data Base \$25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Vatican City Data Base \$25.00 |
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The Computatelist—15, 10, and 5 years ago

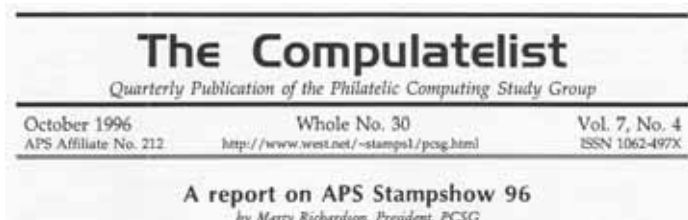
by Bill Sharpe, billsharpe@adelphia.net

Fifteen years ago—October 1991

Between 1990 and January 2002, the group did not issue a newsletter so starting in January 2007, this column will include highlights from that 15 years ago.

Ten years ago —October 1996

Marty Richardson reported on PCSG's activities at APS StampShow 96 in Orlando, Florida. APS set up four booths in a row for the Computers in Philately Committee, Album



Pro, PostalNet and StampFinder. Bob de Violini brought 200 copies of the PCSG flier, which were all distributed by Sunday. He reported that we obtained 20 new members as a direct result of the show.

Al Gore reviewed My Album, a combination inventory and page layout program available on two 3-½ inch disks that could link inventory items with specific album pages. Al mentioned several minor hiccups in the page layout portion of the program and indicated that the inventory capability was modest.

Bob de Violini discussed The Wada Cherry Blossom Forgeries of Japan, a CD-ROM handbook that was entered as a literature item at SESCAL 96. The handbook included 800 pages with over 900 full-color illustrations. It received a vermeil award with felicitations.

I reviewed Yvert & Tellier's CD-ROM catalog covering all stamps issued by France and Monaco through 1995. The catalog included full-color stamp images. You could track your collection, but the only currency option was French francs.

Ranes Chakravorty explained how he used tables in WordPerfect for Windows for his topical database of Ecuadorian medical stamps and other topical items. He originally used Ashton-Tate's Reflex program, which was no longer available in 1996.

Five years ago — October 2001

This issue's lead article was a summary of the 2001 FIP philatelic web site evaluations, which included 71 entries. The overall winner was the Post Office in Paradise site at www.hawaiianstamps.com, which is still active today, cov-



ering all aspects of Hawaiian philately and postal history. Our PCSG site at the time won an award as a top 5% site.

Ken Sanford reviewed a CD-ROM, a history of Australian airmail services by Ken Sparks. Sanford was disappointed that the CD did not include photos of the aircraft involved or any scans of air mail covers.

I discussed the use of commercial programs such as Microsoft Word, Excel, and Access to keep track of stamp inventories.

Bob de Violini provided a summary table for the features of four major stamp inventory programs – EzStamp, StampBase, Stamp Collector's Data Base, and Stamp-Keeper Deluxe. Bob also reviewed a set of album-page programs available for Great Britain and Commonwealth stamps. Bob also reported on PCSG's presence at StampShow 2001 in Chicago (Rosemont). He noted a decrease in the number of people stopping by the PCSG booth compared with previous shows, although we still obtained 13 new members as a result of our presence there. Bob first brought up the suggestion that we consider dropping our participation at stamp shows, at least in manning a booth for the entire four days of a show. In a separate editor's note he outlined the work necessary to create each issue of TC and asked for volunteers to take over the editing task ☐.

Letters to the Editor

(Continued from page 63)

of the fractured catalogue market around the world it would sorely be needed by collectors. Together with the eBay's success of revitalizing stamp collecting around the world, a universal numbering system would be a godsend to stamp collecting! Unfortunately it is not feasible because the existing catalogue publishers would not agree for using their numbers in a concordance (although some DID agree). It is a nice dream!

At this time I want to thank you and the Board of Directors for all the fine work you are putting into PCSG. I really appreciate it!

Bob Morgan ☐

Secretary/Treasurer's report

by Dan Siegel, secretary@pcsg.org

This Secretary/Treasurer's report is truly a mixed bag. Our recent renewal mailing resulted in many "former" members rejoining (or simply realizing that they hadn't yet sent in their dues). On the other hand, a large number of members has not renewed following the last issue. Why? I'm not sure, but hope it's simply because they received the last issue of *The Computatelist* and then forgot to renew – I almost did that myself. Therefore, I will be sending a mailing to our latest group of "former" members to see if they will renew.

I also have to apologize for my slowness in responding to some member inquiries. In October 2005, I left the secure world of guaranteed paychecks and opened two new businesses. I'm an attorney, so I opened a law office; I also started a technology consulting business for attorneys. Since the summer, both businesses are very busy and have literally left me with no free time. Thus, my response time has been dramatically slowed. I apologize to anyone, but as of this writing, all renewals are processed and our records remain up-to-date.

I would like to welcome our newest members:

Gregory Spring
Richard A. Furfman
Dennis Clark
Ian Wright
Gunter Pilz
John L. Larson
Carol Johnson
Joseph Wallach
Robert R. Gaudian
David L. Flaatt
Aloysius Nauman

As of November 4, 2006, PCSG has 275 paid members, a net increase of five members since the last issue. As always, our members are our best ambassadors and can help PCSG grow – by spreading the word about PCSG to your friends and fellow collectors. Tell them about our wonderful journal and our ever-improving website.

Of course, if your membership expires with this issue (there is a colored insert included indicating this is the last issue), it's time for you to renew your membership, which you can do online at www.pcsq.org (through PayPal) or by sending your dues payment to me.

Thanks for all your support. ☐

AskPhil

(Continued from page 76)

come from site readers who notice outdated information. Others send us lists. And, we find a lot of updated information elsewhere on the web ... making certain that what we spot actually is an update. Remember, fact cannot be copyrighted.

Observations

You will not see a name (mine or any other beyond some who have written articles for the site) attached to AskPhil.Org. Our belief is that our role is to provide information and not allow personalities to become entangled with the information itself or its delivery.

All incoming questions to AskPhil, as well as all thank-you notes, have been archived. I believe that just about everything else received electronically also has been archived, but the first two groups have been for sure.

Interestingly, the CCC is not an affiliated club, i.e., not an APS chapter. With that fact and with no advertisers who might object to something on the site or how we answer questions, AskPhil is totally independent. Couple that with the anonymous approach to who is operating the site and AskPhil is free to succeed or fail purely on the quality of service it provides. You cannot believe how important the previous sentence is to me.

Although literally hundreds of other sites link to AskPhil – their choice because we do not have a "you link to me and I will link to you" policy – most of the newcomers to our site (those who have not bookmarked it) come to us via web search engines. BTW: AskPhil has thousands of links ... to stamp dealers, specialty groups, expertizers, philatelic libraries, philatelic museums, worldwide philatelic publications, international philatelic federations, and worldwide philatelic agencies.

Conclusion

We continue our search for additional material that will add value to AskPhil.Org. One area, in particular, that I want to bolster, is stamp identification. That is a very slow process, but a rewarding one. With a steady increase in the number of questions we receive, website development has slowed a bit.

There is an extremely warm feeling knowing that AskPhil has had more than 1.5 million visitors between January 2002 and this writing (I did not keep much of a log before that). And, we have responded to more than 10,000 email-submitted questions.

Please send questions about the site to webmaster@askphil.org. ☐

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