



MCCE NEWS

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Monitor what goes on in your computer lab while gaining the ability to broadcast to and control individual computers. LanSchool does it all.

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If you are not a member of MCCE, here is your chance.

Software Review:

Computer lab monitoring tool does more than play Big Brother

by Vince Long

One of the many challenges teachers face when working with their classes in a computer lab is ensuring that students are on-task and not wasting time playing games or visiting questionable web sites. This is made even more difficult when the computer lab is configured in a way that makes it difficult to see all the computes at the same time. Even if the monitors all face the same direction, it's difficult to see what's going on in the back row when the teacher is helping someone in the front row. This is where LanSchool can help.

System Requirements

LanSchool is a monitoring/management application that requires no additional hardware to implement other than the



computers need to be connected to a local area network, which, of course, they will be if they have direct Internet access. LanSchool works with all varieties of Windows and works well in my lab where I have a mix of Windows 98, 2000, and XP.

The software installs from a compact disc but the installer files can be placed on a network and installed from a central location. There are two parts to the software, the server and the client, with the server piece installed on each of the student computers and the client installed on the teacher computer. The install takes less than a minute and the only option during the process is to specify what "channel" the

(Continued on Page 4)

by Staci Auck

Hard to believe it but it is already getting time to start thinking about the 2006 MEA-MFT Educators' Conference in Billings on October 19-20.

MCCE is excited to inform you that we will have a keynote speaker this year, John Kuglin. A Montana native, John is the Vice President of Education and Training Programs for Comchoice Inc. ComChoice authors DVDs for Warner Brothers, Twentieth Century Fox and the BBC. At ComChoice, John is responsible for creating, developing and marketing the ee DVD (Educationally Enhanced DVD) concept. John serves as an educational consultant, delivering keynote addresses to conferences nationally and internationally. He brings 30 combined years of experience in education, telecommunications, television production, and Internet technology to these efforts.

His keynote address "Navigating a Flat World, Technologies for Gen D" will explore the emerging technologies and demonstrate the new learning environment for the generation of students that have grown up with digital devices and a digital culture. He will also be presenting two breakout sectionals "The New Digital Tool Set: Harnessing the Power for Today's Educator" and "Smart Locations, Smart Stories." Those of you who have heard him speak before know what a dynamic and informative presenter he is, so be ready to be motivated, inspired and energized to reach and teach students in this new digital world.

I would also like to put out a plea to you members to present or to encourage someone else to present that you know. A reminder that MEA will pay a stipend of \$30 per hour for sectionals and our own organization will pay a \$20 flat stipend to those that present under the MCCE curriculum group. It is easy to apply. The on-line Application to Present is now up and running at www.mea-mft.org. Go to the bottom of the page under "Other info" and chose the second choice of "MEA-MFT Educators' Conference." You will need to register first, but once done, filling in the application and submitting is a snap. It is really slick!

Watch the listserv for dates and subjects on the "Tech Talk" interactive video discussion hosted throughout the state at various METNET and VisionNet sites.

Tentative dates are:

Tuesday, February 28, 2006, 3:00-5:00p.m.

1. Intel Teach to the Future
2. TAGLET

Tuesday, April 25, 2006, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

(Topics to be decided)

Again, please consider attending and presenting at the MEA-MFT conference. There isn't a conference of this quality anywhere for the small registration fee of only \$25... plus, the stipends for presenting more than cover this cost.

Until next time...



MCCE NEWS

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**Next Submission Deadline:
April 12, 2005**

**This and past issues of MCCE News are available on the World Wide Web at:
<http://senior.billings.k12.mt.us/mcce/>**

Free stuff through Freecycle

by Vince Long

One of the unfortunate side effects of our consumer society is the amount of waste we generate and how that waste rapidly fills our landfills. In Montana, with our wide open spaces, this may not seem like the pressing issue it is in more densely populated states, but reducing waste is still an admirable goal. Recycling is certainly a popular option and brings to mind items like aluminum cans and newspapers, however, other items could be diverted from the landfill if there was a way to connect them with a new owner.

Freecycle (<http://www.freecycle.org/>), a web-based answer to this problem, connects cast off goods with people who want them. From the main website, visitors can sign up to join a free mailing list that is run and moderated by volunteers in their local area. Once signed up, users receive all postings sent to their local list. The way it works is that when a member wants to give something away they post a message to the list with a description of what the item is, its condition, and, perhaps, where it is located. The first person to claim the item gets it. Transportation is arranged by the parties involved and everyone else on the list sees that the items have found a new home.

Does this mean that people are posting junk for giveaway? Not at all. I have been watching the Billings area Freecycle group since last August and here is a partial listing of what has been given away:

4 kitchen chairs	chandelier
puppies	Jerusalem artichokes
60 gallon terrarium	exercise equipment
satellite dish	leftover Halloween candy
wood stove	bookcases
lots of clothes	luggage
lots of books	camping gear
water bed	color television
toys	golf balls
blankets	lunch boxes
image scanner	space heater
doors	fax machine
two overhead projectors	vacuum cleaner
two opaque projectors	Sony PSP game console
charbroil gas grill	trampoline
American flags	microwave oven
stamp pads	aquariums with fish
Gmail accounts	riding lawn mower



According to the main web site there are over 3,300 individual mailing lists (communities) totaling almost 2 million members which include those in the U.S., Canada, and countries as diverse as Nepal, Ethiopia, Romania, and Trinidad. Each community has its own web site, hosted through Yahoo Groups, which explain any local rules and provides an archive of past postings. The web sites also have a file area where members can post information related to the group and an area for the posting of photographs.

The rules of freecycling are simple. Everything offered must be free, legal, and appropriate for all ages. Rule breakers are dropped from the mailing list by the moderator. While it is allowed to ask for an item, most groups usually



require that your first posting be an offer of an item. If you want to take an item, you send email directly to the person who is offering it. The offerer then posts to the group that the item has been taken.

There are nine Freecycle groups in Montana representing Bozeman, Billings, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, Kalispell, Libby, Missoula, and Polson. The Kalispell group boasts the largest membership at nearly 600. Setting up a group is free and easy with instructions found on the main Freecycle web site.

Do you want near-immediate answers to your tech questions?

Join MCCE and have access to the expertise of our membership through our online mailing list. See our membership form on Page 11.



SOFTWARE REVIEW

LanSchool

(Continued from Page 1)

software should use in a range from 1 to 256. The channel setting ensures that there will not be conflicts if LanSchool is running in another lab in the building. I installed the software on the 28 computers in my lab in less than 15 minutes.

Once installed, LanSchool appears as an icon in the system tray of the computer desktop. On the student computer, clicking on the icon with the left or right mouse button has no effect while double clicking opens the LanSchool folder on the student computer. The use of the folder is covered below.

Uninstalling requires the use of the install program. While this may seem a bit inconvenient, it prevents students from uninstalling the software from their computer if they have that level of access.

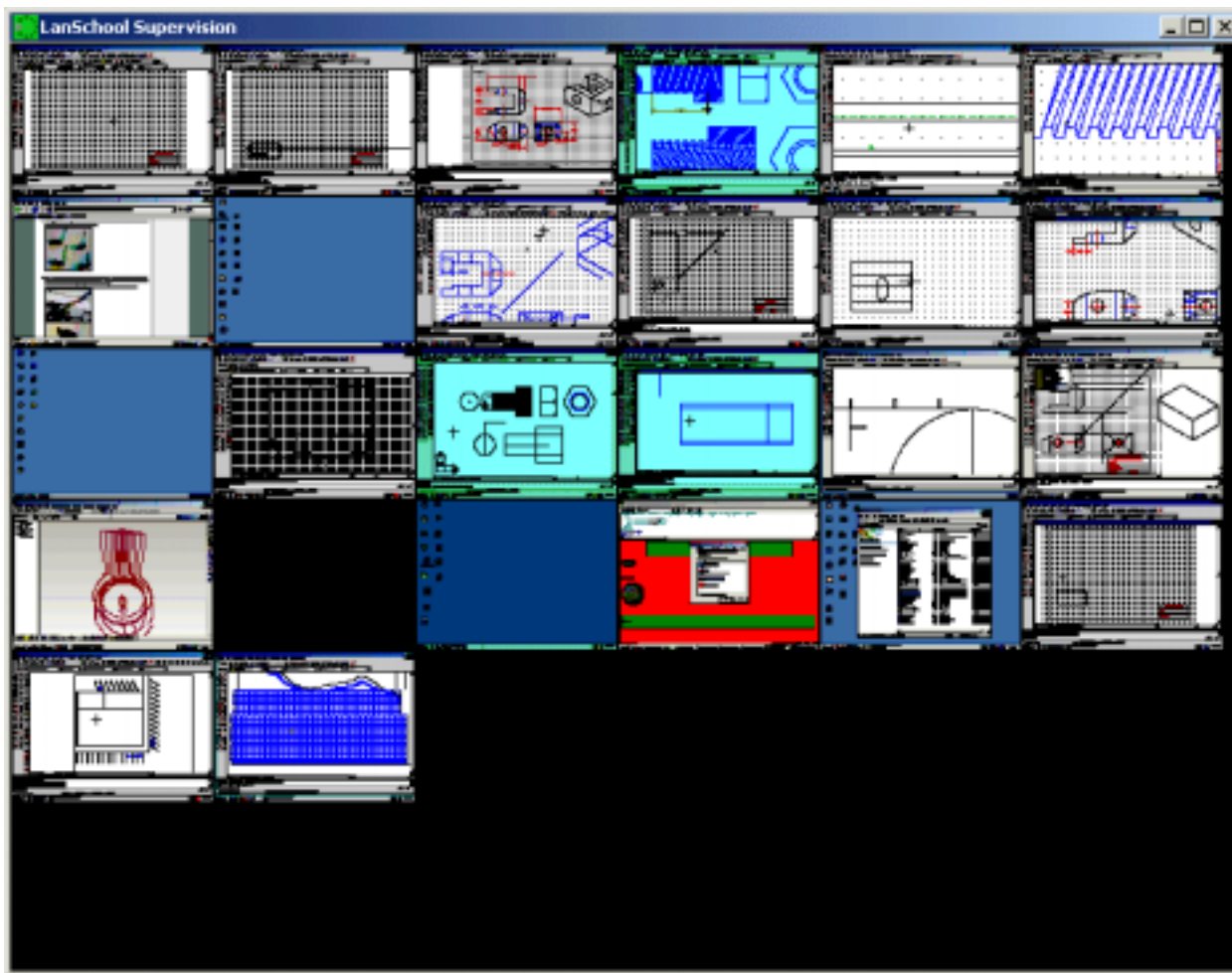
Features

The monitoring features of LanSchool are excellent with the teacher's computer having extensive access to each of the student computers. From the teacher computer we can see what computers are on the network in a screen where they are listed by username and machine name. In my room each computer has the name of an inventor or scientist which makes it easier for me than if they simply had numbers.

From the list of student computers we have a variety of options that can be applied to all or selected computers. Here are some of the options:

View All – Opens a window of the teacher computer with a thumbnail view of each student desktop. (See sample below.) An enlarged view of the student desktop can be opened by double clicking on the thumbnail.

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LanSchool

(Continued from Page 4)

View Selected – View an individual student computer.

Enable/Disable Student Web Browsing – You can control web access for an individual or all computers.

Remote Control – Open a student computer on the teacher computer and control their mouse and keyboard.

You can also select all or a group of students and right-click on that selection to have additional options:

Send a Test Message – The message will appear as a popup on the student computer.

Start a Screen Broadcast – Send the teacher computer desktop to the student computers.

Blank Screens – Turns student computer screens black and disables their mouse and keyboard.

Run a Program – Allows you to launch a program on the student computer.

View Internet History – This only works if the computer is using Internet Explorer as the web browser.

Save Screen Shot – Grabs a snapshot of the student computer desktop and saves the image on the teacher computer in BMP format.

Power Off – This feature shuts down all the selected computers.

LanSchool in Use

Playing Big Brother is an obvious use of this application but, for me, that is not its best feature. I have started using it to demonstrate software rather than use my video projector. Instead of straining to see what I am doing on the projector, with the Screen Broadcast option the student sees what I am doing right on their own computer. This works for most applications but I have encountered a few that have trouble feeding an updated screen to the student computers. For example, in ProDesktop, a computer-aided design program, the screen appears blank on the student computers unless the mouse is moved back and forth over the screen on the teacher computer to “paint” the image. Feeding video that streams off a website to each student computer actually works but is a bit choppy.

Another feature I find useful is the ability to blank out the

student’s screens. When I am talking to the class I always see some eyes glued to their monitors. LanSchool solves that problem with a single mouse click that blanks out their screen with the exception of a dotted line around its perimeter. Another single mouse click restores them.

I find the shutdown features especially handy at the end of the day. With a few mouse clicks I can shutdown every computer in the classroom. While this works well on machines running Windows XP, your results will vary on other versions of Windows. In Windows 2000 they generally shutdown fine but their Active Desktop might need to be enabled on restart. In Windows 98 it will shutdown Windows but on some computers you may have to manually shut their power off. Still, it is a timesaver when compared to manually shutting down each system.

If you wanted to play Big Brother, a interesting way to do this is to show the teacher computer desktop on a video projector while showing all the student desktops. This way, you and the whole class can see what each computer is doing.

While I like and use many of the features in the application, there is one I would like to see added in future releases. Broadcasting the teacher computer to all student computers is great but you cannot select a student computer and broadcast it to the students. This would be useful when wanting to demonstrate something students have on their computers.

LanSchool is not inexpensive, nor is it the only tool like this available, however, when comparing features and price I found that LanSchool met my specifications. The cost is \$795.00 but you can install it on as many computers as you have in a single lab. The documentation that comes with it is adequate and, for the most part, you will not need to refer to it as the application is self-explanatory. If you would like to try it before making a purchase there is a 30-day, full working demo available on their web site. I tried it first and was immediately sold on the product.

Ordering information for LanSchool can be found at <http://www.lanschool.com/>

WANTED

Newsletter Articles for MCCE News

Software Reviews,
Classroom Technology Tips, Student-
Written Stories, Web Site Reviews

How-to FTP using Internet Explorer

by Vince Long

FTP (File Transfer Protocol) is the method used to send or receive files from another computer on the Internet. While this method goes back to the earliest, pre-Web, days of the Internet, today it is the primarily method used to send files to a webserver. If you have learned how to create a web page and wondered what to do with it, here are two methods that will get your site online. One uses Internet Explorer and the other uses a stand-alone FTP client program.

Before you get going, you need an account on a web server, either through your Internet Service Provider or your school's web site. Check with your ISP or school web master.

Getting Started

Launch Internet Explorer by clicking on its icon or click on Start -> Run, type iexplore in the text box and then click OK.

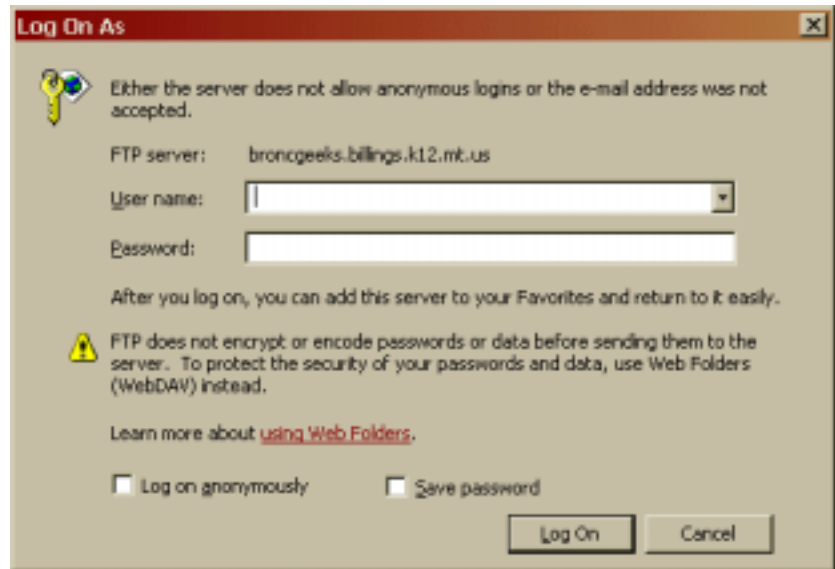
Once IE is open, we need to point it to the FTP server. In the address bar type the name of the FTP server. Notice that the address looks like a web address but the address starts with an "ftp" instead of an "http." Here is an example:

ftp://broncgeeks.billings.k12.mt.us



After entering the address, press the Enter key.

A "Login As" dialog box will open:



Enter your assigned user name and password in the boxes shown and click on Login. You will be logged in to your directory. It will appear in your browser window and show whatever files are currently in your folder.

If there is a file named "total 1" that appears in the folder, you can just ignore it.

Uploading Files

To send a file to the server, just drag it into the browser window. It is usually easier to do this if you resize your browser window and have the window that has the file you wish to transfer next to it. In the example, at the top of the following page, the window on the left is opened to the folder on your hard drive that contains the files you wish to send to the server. The window on the right contains the files on the server.

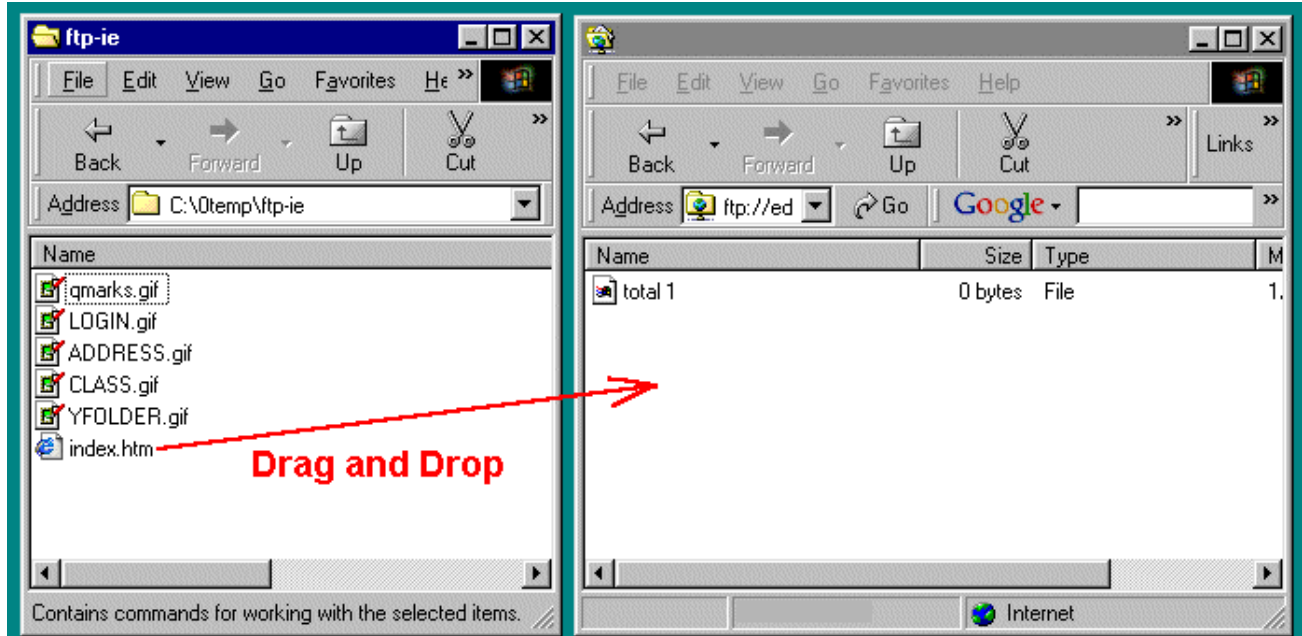
Select the file, or files, you want to upload, drag them into the browser window, and release the mouse button.

You will see your file in the browser window after it has been uploaded.

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How to FTP using Internet Explorer

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You can also use traditional copy and paste techniques to upload files. Select the file(s) you wish to upload, select Copy from the Edit Menu, or by right-clicking on a selected file and clicking on Copy, or by pressing CTRL-C. Click inside the browser window and paste by selecting Paste from the Edit menu, or right-clicking the mouse and selecting Paste, or by pressing CTRL-V.

Downloading Files

While dragging and dropping files is an easy way to upload, that operation is not supported in downloading. To bring a file from the server to your computer, select the file(s) in the browser window and then right-click on it. In the pop-up menu select "Copy to Folder."

Use the "Browse to Folder" dialog box that will open to select the place on your computer where you would like the files to go and then click on the OK button.

Managing Files

You can perform many of the standard file management operations from within the browser window. When there are none selected, right-click in the browser window to open the context menu. By selecting New -> Folder, you can create folders in your server file space. Right-clicking

on a selected file will let you delete and rename it.

Tips for Using FTP

While FTP is used primarily for moving files, here are some tips that will help you avoid problems as you manage your web site:

- * keep file names simple: do not use spaces or punctuation
- * if you create folders for different parts of your site you will need to include the folder names in your links
- * build the file structure of your site on your local computer to match the one you will have online: same folder names, same file names
- * you have to empty a folder before you can delete it
- * most FTP servers will log you off for inactivity so you may need to reconnect if you have not performed an operation for 5 minutes
- * other browsers may or may not support FTP or may require installing a plugin

A copy of this article with additional illustrations is available at:

<http://broncgeeks.billings.k12.mt.us/ftp-ie/index.htm>

(How to FTP with WS-FTP is continued on Page 8)

How-to FTP using WS-FTP

by Vince Long

FTP (File Transfer Protocol) is both the name of a protocol and the word we use to describe the process. The protocol sets up the rules the two computers will use to transfer files from one machine to the other, referred to as uploading and downloading. FTP is also the word we use to describe what we are doing, for example, "I need to FTP that file to a server."

Getting Started and Installing the Program

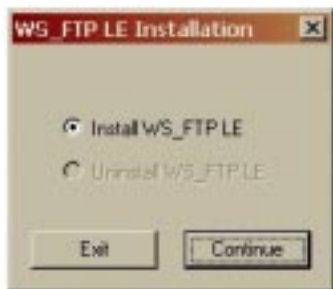
First off you will need a copy of the FTP program. There are several out there and most of them are free. I have used WS_FTP LE for many years and have just stuck with it since it does everything I could want out of an FTP client.

Download the program from this web site:

http://senior.billings.k12.mt.us/files/webmaster/FTP_Client/WS-FTP_LE_5.08/

You will see that name ws_ftple.exe. Right-click on it and select "Save it as..." or "Save Target As..." in your browser to save the file on your computer.

Once the download is complete, find the file where you saved it and double-click on it. The installer will launch and you will see the window shown below.



Click on "Continue."

The next window will ask you information about yourself to check if you qualify for the free version. Check the box that indicates student or faculty member and then click on "Next."

The next window will ask how you will use the program. Check the boxes that indicate "at school" and "for academic work" and then click on "Next."

Then the license agreement will appear. Read it and then click on "Accept."

The next window will show you the destination folder where the program will be installed. If you wish to install it in a different folder, type in the file path for it. Click on "OK."

It will then ask where files should be transferred. By default it will be to the folder where you installed WS_FTP, however, you can easily change this later. Just click on "OK."

Next it will ask you about where to set up the Program Group. Just click on OK.

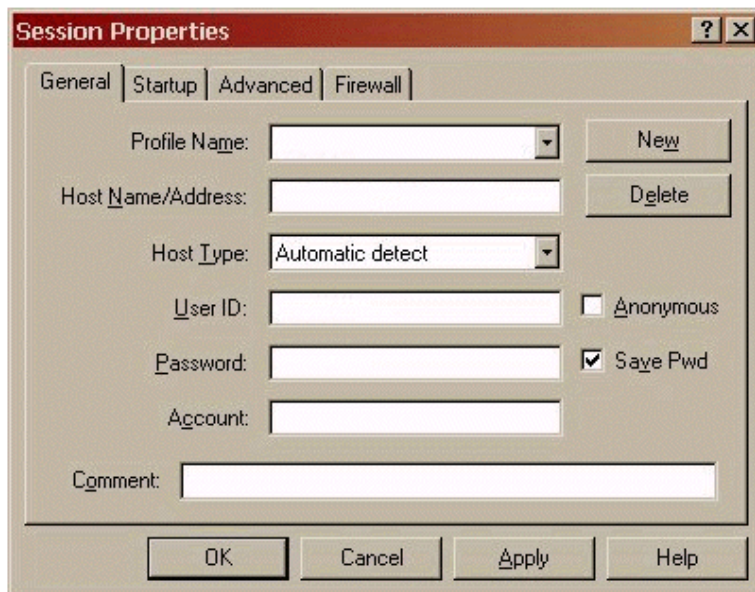
The software will then install. When it is done you will see a message that indicates that the installation was successful.

Using the Program

Find the program on your computer by clicking on Start, Programs, etc. and finding the WS_FTP group and clicking on the program name.

When the program starts you should get a Session Properties windows. If not, click on the "Connect" button in the lower left of the program window.

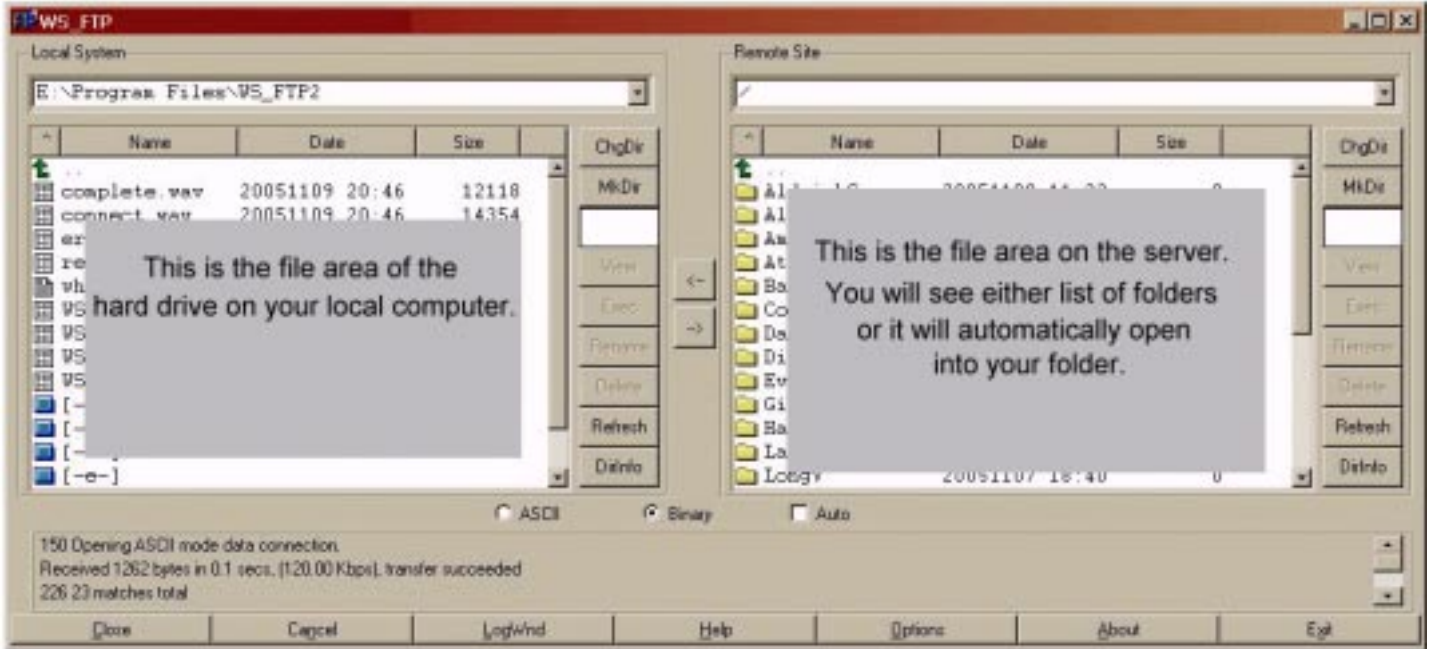
The Session Properties window is where we set up the



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How to FTP using WS-FTP

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information required to connect to the server. WS_FTP lets you create accounts to multiple servers giving each connection a different Profile Name.

To set up a new profile to connect to your server, click on the "New" button to clear the data, then fill out the information required:

- Profile Name:** You can give this any name you wish
- Host Name/Address:** type the server address here
- Host Type:** Automatic Detect
- User ID:** as assigned by your ISP or webmaster
- Password:** as assigned by your ISP or webmaster

Leave everything else blank.

Click on the "OK" button to connect to the server. If you have done everything correctly, and the server is online, you will see windows that look like the one above.

Uploading and Downloading

The window on the left shows your hard drive and the window on the right shows the hard drive on the server. In the right window find your folder and open it by double-clicking on it.

In the left window you need to find the folder in which the files you wish to upload are stored. You can move up one level by double-clicking on the two dots to the left of the green arrow which is found in the upper left hand corner of the window.

Once you have the two windows showing the folder contents that you wish to transfer, select the file(s) and then click on the arrow between the two windows that points in the direction you wish to send the files.

A copy of this article with additional illustrations is available at:

http://broncgeeks.billings.k12.mt.us/ftp-ws_ftp/index.htm



Web sites and programs of interest to educators

www.digg.com

What is there not to like about this site. It is a continuously updated geek- and tech-related news feed covering topics from hardware, to software, to insider scuttlebutt. The links to the stories take you to the original source but there is a comments section under each link where discussion on that topic can, and does, take place.

www.smartbrief.com/ascd/

The well-known educational publishing company has a daily newsletter that arrives via email. It's called SmartBrief and, like digg.com, features links to stories elsewhere on the web. The topics are all related to the greater world of education and hardly a day goes by that I don't find at least one or two that demand my attention. It's a great way to stay informed while ASCD does the legwork for you.

www.tutorialized.com

Have you ever needed a tutorial on a tech topic and wondered where you might find one? Look no further than this site which has online tutorials for various software applications, programming languages, and web site design. The products covered include the usual stable of Microsoft and Adobe products but also include AutoCad and Macromedia products. The actual tutorials are from external sites but tutorialized makes finding them quite easy.

www.openoffice.org

If you have not made the move to the free OpenOffice.org to replace Microsoft Office it is about time. OpenOffice 2.0 is now available and it is ready to replace the Microsoft product for all your word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software needs. And did I mention that it is free?

Free OpenOffice Training Videos

So you have made the move to OpenOffice and want some training, huh? Check out this site which has videos that walk you through the fine points of using the free product.

<http://business.newsforge.com/business/05/11/09/2044220.shtml?tid=35&tid=136&tid=130>

www.nvu.com

When it comes to web page building the products to assist you in that endeavor range from the simplest text editor, like Windows Notepad, to the industrial-strength variety like Dreamweaver. Somewhere in the middle is NVU, a free application that is available for Windows, Macintosh, and Linux. My students have been test driving it and find that it is very easy to learn and quite powerful. The price makes it a great choice for the classroom.

www.clamwin.org

Most users would not think of running a computer without virus protection these days, unlike your editor, but that is for another day. Most new computers arrive with a copy of Norton Anti-Virus or similar product that update themselves for a year but then require a paid subscription. At that point you might want to give WinClam a try. It is free and works as advertised. I loaded some virus infected files on a "sacrificial" computer and they were detected without a problem.

www.100-downloads.com

This site describes itself as a list of the top 100 essential programs for Windows XP. You could argue over what is essential and what is not but don't miss out on the fact that all these programs are free. They are arranged in groups such as audio tools, image editors, spyware and anti-virus programs, utilities of all types, media players, file sharing tools, web browsers and related tools, voice chat, and many others. The site features direct links for downloading the programs and links to the products' web pages.

pack.google.com

This is Google's version of the essential software list shown above but the pack from Google contains Google software with a few others. With a single download you get the Google Toolbar for Internet Explorer (quick search and pop-up stopper), Picassa (photo organizer), Google Screensaver (make slide shows from your pictures), Google Desktop (get your desktop organized), and Google Earth (3D Earth Browser). Also included is Adaware (spyware removal), Acrobat Reader (view PDF files), and Norton Anti-virus (6-month subscription).

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