



**FRONT RANGE
PC USERS GROUP**

The Monthly Edition Of The

k-Byte

Newsletter



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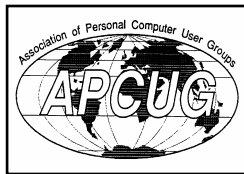
Users Helping Users

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JULY IS "ZOO MONTH"—SEE PAGE 6

NO MEETING IN AUGUST



Quote of the Month

Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.

H. G. Wells [1920]

Upgrading to an LCD Monitor

by Herb Goldstein, Software Evaluation Chairman and Reviews Editor, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
<http://www.spcug.org>, [reviewseeditor\(at\)spcug.org](mailto:reviewseeditor(at)spcug.org)

Actually, I was happy with my high quality CRT (cathode ray tube) monitor. It was with considerable reluctance that I recently decided to get with the modern era and upgrade to an LCD. It has been quite a learning experience. Looking back, I realize that there are a number of very important practical considerations of which I was unaware in making the change and in making a choice. Perhaps I can pass along a summary of them along with some insight gained by hands-on experience to make the experience a little easier for you than it was for me. You need to do your homework both before and during your investigation. Here are some of the most important things you should know.

An LCD monitor offers considerable advantages in upgrading from a CRT. It is infinitely lighter and takes up much less desk space than a CRT. It uses the smallest fraction of electricity by comparison and is devoid of radiation concerns. When properly installed, its display may prove brighter, sharper and provide superb color.

SIZE: In any size range, an LCD will display more viewable screen than a similarly sized CRT. I decided on a 19 incher, the size of my CRT that I was happy with. Seventeen may work for you if that's what pleased you on your CRT. Over 19 for average use is both too much screen and excessive cost for most people.

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About *k-Byte*

Published monthly, *k-Byte* is the official newsletter of the Front Range Personal Computer Users Group (FRPCUG): our mailing address is PMB 152, 305 W. Magnolia, Fort Collins, Colorado 80521.

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Submissions

Articles, letters and short items of interest on computer-related topics are welcome and encouraged. All items submitted for publication are subject to editing. Send your contribution to the editor via e-mail attachment or submit on disk. If you have questions about a submission, please contact the editor for information.

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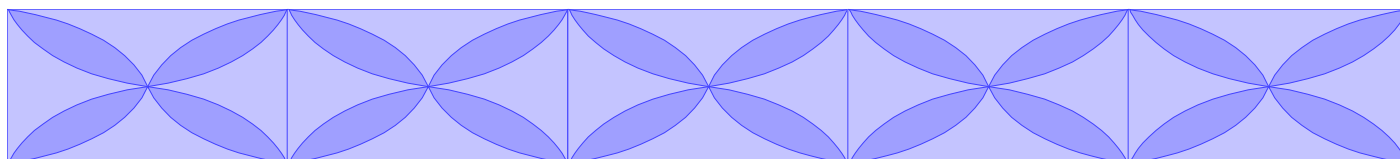
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About FRPCUG

FRPCUG is an independent nonprofit computer society, so incorporated with the State of Colorado and open to anyone interested in Windows, or UNIX/LINUX microcomputers. Its purpose is to provide an educational and scientific forum of mutual benefit for members of the micro-computer community. FRPCUG holds a monthly meeting and conducts various special interest groups (SIGs) and seminars. Members have voting privileges, subscription to *k-Byte* newsletter, and access to SIGs and selected seminars. Annual dues are \$25 for individual/family membership (\$20 for students) and \$50 for corporate/group membership.



(Continued from page 1)

ORIENTATION: Most prefer a normal tall screen (portrait view) for average usage. Wide (landscape) screens are available at greater cost in the same size range and are not recommended unless you have a special need for that display. Some makes offer a swivel screen that you can change from tall to wide and back again instantly. You will pay considerably more for this feature when it is available.

COST: Has been decreasing from a few thousand some short years ago to a few hundred today. A quality 17 inch LCD can be found today for under \$200, and a 19 incher for less than \$300. If you have a watchful eye, special sales are common and offer substantial saving.

BRAND: There is a very significant display quality to be gained in better models of better brands. The most common best quality brands usually topping the review lists in computer publications are LG, NEC, Viewsonic, Dell and Samsung. Different models in the same brand provide different features. Check them out carefully on their respective websites and "Google" for reviews. You need to do your homework both before and during your shopping experiences if you want the best for your buck.

WARRANTY: Better brands provide a 3 year replacement on defective monitors. Don't settle for a one year warranty!

VIEWING ANGLE: Unlike a CRT, an LCD's view falls off sharply at the sides when you are not positioned in front of your monitor. In practical usage, this should not be at all a problem. Your view will be just fine when you are normally seated at your screen, with more than sufficient leeway from the norm.

RESPONSE TIME: Usually indicated in the advertising of better models. A faster response time is better--it indicates how quickly the screen can refresh a video image. If an LCD's response time is too slow, the display's pixels won't be able to keep up with the information sent from the computer's graphics card, and you may see ghosting and digital noise as a result. 8ms or better response time is common on quality LCD's and is preferred! The lower the response time, the less of a blurring effect is possible on the screen.

ANALOG VS. DIGITAL: Video cards can provide outlets for two different monitor display types, analog and digital. CRT monitors are cabled to your video card with an analog (15 pin) cable. LCD's usually provide the same cable and connection but will provide a significantly better display when attached via a digital (VDI-D) to a digital port on your video card. Better LCD's provide both digital and analog connections. So do better video cards. If your card doesn't have a digital port, you can either replace the card with one that does, or you can add an additional card. Easy to do. Just plug it into a PCI slot and your computer will recognize it. You are really better off in many ways with a better card.

If need be, you can run your LCD with the same analog connection as you used for your CRT previously, but a digital connection will give you better results.

NATIVE RESOLUTION: LCD monitors will provide their best display when run at their "native resolution" which varies with the size of the monitor. For a 19 incher, the native resolution is 1280x1024. The resolution of a display can be changed easily by right-clicking on an empty area of your desktop and selecting "properties," and "settings." The same can be accomplished through your Control Panel in your Start Menu. Normally the correct choice will be made automatically by the installation software that accompanies your new monitor.

When you change your most common CRT setting of 1080x760 to 1280x1024, everything, including all your icons and fonts, will suddenly appear much smaller. Your LCD display however will become infinitely sharper. If you find it strange to your eyes, you can easily change your display properties to provide larger fonts. Additionally, many programs like word processors permit you to change your text to any size you wish while maintaining its quality, regardless of screen resolution.

Running at native resolution (your choice to do or not, but very highly recommended) will make your screen display smaller but you will be able to accommodate more viewed area on a page. It may be strange some

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what to your eyes at first, but the greatly increased sharpness and over-all quality of your LCD display will more than make up for it, especially if you are using digital rather than analog display.

AUTO-DISPLAY: Most quality LCD monitors will automatically install at their best display settings when you plug them in. However, they will also provide easy to adjust menu settings for most of their values that permit you to easily adjust the display to what is most pleasing to your eyes. The most common adjustment people make is for brightness. Most LCD monitors tend to be too bright unless adjusted. LCD screen illumination is entirely different and better than that from a CRT.

RUNNING MULTIPLE MONITORS: What to do with your CRT now that you have your new LCD? One of your choices may be to keep it and run two monitors side-by-side. If you are using Windows XP and you have two ports on your video card (or two video cards), it's easy to do with a few simple settings in your display properties menu. You will then be able to run two different programs at the same time and easily drag items from one monitor screen to the other. Your cursor will readily mouse from one monitor to the other alongside. It can double your productivity and allow you to see and do things you did not know were possible.

Over all, upgrading to an LCD monitor will greatly enhance your computer experience and enjoyment. It's way more than worth any effort or expense involved.

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What Do You Use To Frame Your Digital Images?

By Fran Damratowski, Refurbishing SIG Chair, Chesapeake PC Users Group, MD
<http://www.chesapeakepcusersgroup.org>, [refurbishing\(at\)chesapeakepcusersgroup.org](mailto:refurbishing(at)chesapeakepcusersgroup.org)

When using a 35mm camera, photos are framed using a viewfinder. One of two basic types of viewfinders is used. One type used by single lens reflex (SLR) cameras is a through the lens (TTL) optical viewfinder. The SLR TTL viewfinders use a mirror and pentaprism or porro finder to reflect the light/image directly through the lens to the viewfinder without changing the light/image (what you see is what you get). The second types are optical viewfinders that do not project the actual image directly to the viewfinder. They are (1) rangefinders that use the principle of triangulation and mirrors and (2) optical tunnel viewfinders that consist of a tunnel that goes from a small lens, near the photographic lens, and the viewfinder. The problem with the optical viewfinders is parallax error. What you see is not exactly you get, because the complete image does not come through the camera lens to the viewfinder. What you see is actually less than what you get.

Digital cameras have several different types of viewfinders, optical tunnel viewfinders as described above and TTL viewfinders. There are three types of TTL's: liquid crystal displays (LCDs) that are located on the camera, Electronic Viewfinders (EVF), and the mirror and pentaprism or porro finder that used in digital single lens reflex (DSLR) cameras.

An LCD panel is essentially a small TV built into the digital camera. The camera has a lens that admits light to an image sensor that converts it to data. The data is then sent to a mini computer in the camera that sends the data as an image to the LCD panel. The LCD panel is as active as a TV screen and changes as the image in front of the lens changes. What you see is what you get when you click the shutter button.

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An EVF is basically an LCD panel, about 0.5 inches diagonally, located behind the small viewfinder on the back of the camera. The image that is seen through this eye level viewfinder is exactly what is seen on the LCD panel and will be captured when the shutter button is clicked.

DSLR cameras use the same the mirror and pentaprism or porro finder that are used in 35 mm SLR cameras. Very few of DSLRs use an LCD panel to frame the photo. The LCD panel in most DSLR cameras is used to view the image after it has been captured to the memory card.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the various types of viewfinders:

Because LCD panels are TTL viewfinders they have the advantage of showing about 100% of the image that will be captured when the shutter button is clicked. There is no parallax error. You can immediately see the effects of zooming in on your subject. It is excellent for accurate framing. If you use an extension or a filter on the camera lens you will see the effect of the extension or filter. You can view the images and immediately delete those you don't want to keep. You can also view the camera settings if you desire. The LCD panel works well in dim light.

One of the major disadvantages is that they generally perform poorly in some situations such as when reflections and glare are present and in bright sunlight. The image is also difficult to see on monitor in some dark situations because the human eye can see about twice the light the LCD portrays. Some of these problems can be corrected with antireflective coatings; trans-reflective technology that increases brightness and provides better contrast; and wider viewing angles.

Some LCD panels are better than others. Larger LCD panels are easier to see than smaller LCD panels, but to place a 2.5 or 3-inch LCD panel on a camera you must have a large camera or give up the option of an EVF or optical viewfinder. Digicams without an EVF or optical viewfinder are less expensive to manufacture. LCD panels are made up of pixels. Poor quality LCD panels will have fewer pixels and may have a lot of digital noise (bad pixels). A better LCD panel will have more pixels, but it will use more power. See the manufacturer's specifications for the number of pixels on the LCD panel.

LCD panels use backlighting. Consequently they use a lot of power. If the LCD panel is left on for a long period of time it will drain the battery very quickly. This in turn translates into lost pictures because there is no power, or additional cost for extra batteries.

Most Digicams have the LCD panel located on the back of the camera and integrated into the camera body. The first consumer digicam with an LCD panel was the Casio QV-10 released in 1995. This camera had an articulating body. Cameras with articulating bodies and articulating screens are still being manufactured today. With these cameras, pictures can be taken from any angle such as overhead, out a window, pointing the camera at the subject but looking in another direction.



The main advantage to a digicam with an EVF is that it is TTL focusing and there is no parallax error when looking through the viewfinder. What you see is what you get. An EVF or optical tunnel viewfinder is a necessity if the LCD panel fades out in the sun or the battery power is low. If the digicam has a zoom power over 5X the EVF is the only eyelevel viewfinder available. The tunnel optical viewfinder is not an option.

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Calendar of Events

July General Forum Meeting

We will meet at the Fort Collins Senior Center on:

Day	Date	Time
Tuesday	July 10th	7:00 PM

Meeting Agenda:

Time	Topic
7:00 to 7:15	Announcements
7:15 to 8:00	Open Forum
8:00 to 8:15	Break
8:15 to 9:00	Annual Hardware/ Software Zoo

SPECIAL DATE

August General Forum Meeting

We will meet at the Fort Collins Senior Center on:

Day	Date	Time
Tuesday		7:00 PM

Meeting Agenda:

Time	Topic
7:00 to 7:15	Announcements
7:15 to 8:00	Open Forum
8:00 to 8:15	Break
8:15 to 9:00	

NO MEETING IN AUGUST

*See you at the meetings!
Get full membership benefits. If you are
not a current member, download an
application from
<http://www.frpcug.org/memberap.html>*

Future General Forum Meeting Notes

July is Show and Tell time, or maybe Show and Sell. Or perhaps, Show and Swap. Whatever your interest is, The July 10th General Forum meeting is the date of the annual **HARDWARE/SOFTWARE ZOO**.

PLUS: A Quick tour of the newly and expertly re-modeled FRPCUG website. Learn about the member benefits now available on the website—including special offers for hardware, software and publications.

THANKS TO MEMBERS JIM BRAGONIER AND CHARLES MCJILTON FOR THEIR EFFORTS ON THE WEBSITE.

Future SIG's, Seminars, and Other Meetings

New Technology SIG

The New Technology SIG provides advance support for all PC related operating system and telecommunication issues. The meetings are held at 7:00 PM on the third Thursday of each month at Bluebird Manufacturing Inc., 1421 Webster Avenue, in Fort Collins. For more information, contact Chuck McJilton at 970-493-2987.

Board Meeting

FRPCUG's executive board meets on Wednesday of the week following the General Forum meeting. All members are welcome and are encouraged to attend. These meetings are held at 7:00 PM in the Staff Board Room of the Fort Collins Senior Center.

Shop Talk

One-on-one assistance. Drop in to the Senior Center lobby on any Saturday (holidays excepted) from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Directions to the Fort Collins Senior Center

The Fort Collins Senior Center is located at 1200 Raintree Drive. This site is situated at the northwest corner of the Shields and Raintree Drive intersection, on the north side of the Raintree Shopping Center. Check the marquee at the main entrance for directions to the specific meeting room. See map on page 12.

July 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 HOLIDAY	5	6	7 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
8	9	10 FRPCUG General Forum Meeting 7:00 PM	11	12	13	14 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
15	16	TWO SPECIAL DATES		18 FRPCUG Board Meeting 7:00 PM	19 New Technology SIG Meeting 7:00 PM	21 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
22	23			24	25	26
29	30	31				

August 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
			1	2	3	4 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM	
12	13	SPECIAL DATE		15 FRPCUG Board Meeting 7:00 PM	16 New Technology SIG Meeting 7:00 PM	17	18 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 Shop Talk 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM	
26	27	28	29	30	31		

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The disadvantages of an EVF consist of slower reaction to changing views, the resolution is lower than an optical viewfinder, because it has an LCD it uses battery power, and it freezes between shots with rapid sequential shooting.

The old optical tunnel viewfinder has several advantages. It always works; it uses no power; and light goes directly through the camera without changing-just like the optical TTL viewfinder in an SLR. The optical tunnel viewfinder is ideal for someone who likes to hold the camera to the eye to shoot a picture.

Because the optical tunnel viewfinder does not use the photographic lens, only about 85% of the image is seen. As a matter of fact, the closer to the subject, the greater the variance from the photographic lens. The optical tunnel viewfinder should not be used when shooting a picture of the sun because there is nothing to protect the eye.

The optical tunnel viewfinder and EVF are omitted from many cameras because the cameras can be smaller and it is less expensive to manufacture them.

The future

An LCD panel is made up of a white backlight that changes color as it passes through a crystalline material. It is the power hungry backlight that depletes the battery power. A new type of panel being investigated is the organic light emitting diode (OLED). The OLED is carbon based as opposed to the crystalline material used by the LCD. The carbon-based molecules can be sprayed on any material and do not require a backlight. That makes OLEDs more power efficient, brighter, and with a wider angle of view. From a marketing standpoint an OLED is less complicated and less expensive to manufacture.

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Tip of the Month

by Karen Tangeman
Big Bear Computer Club, <http://www.bigbearcc.org>

Understanding Templates in Microsoft Word

A template is nothing more than a pattern used by Word to describe how your document looks and how you interact with the document. Templates contain formatting information, a style sheet, macros, toolbar and menu modifications, and boilerplate text. In Word, templates all end with the DOT extension (this stands for Document Template). If you want to create a template, you follow these steps:

1. Start a new document.
2. Make your changes to formatting, macros, and the toolbars and menus.
3. Save with Document Template (*.dot) selected in the Save As Type drop-down list.

That's all there is to it. Generally, selecting Document Template in the Save As Type drop-down list will move you to your templates directory. However, you should make sure that you save your new template file in the same directory with all your other template files. That way it will be available for future use.

This tip applies to Microsoft Word versions 97, 2000, 2002 and 2003



Thoughts on Upgrading PC Hardware and Software

by Dick Maybach, Columnist, Brookdale Computer User Group (BCUG) Brookdale, NJ
<http://www.bcug.org>, n2nd(at)att.net

I can think of three valid reasons for upgrading a PC: (1) to try something new, (2) to improve performance, and (3) to solve a problem. Trying something new means you are treating your PC as a hobby. In this case you don't really need to upgrade, but you want to. Just bear in mind that there are risks, which means that you may get more adventure than you planned on. Improving performance is difficult to justify, unless your system is very old. Almost any system will do just fine surfing the net, word processing, balancing your checkbook, etc. Upgrading your hardware will often provide no discernable speed-up, because the speed is really limited by your typing speed or Internet connection. Upgrading your software may actually slow things down, because newer software has more features and requires more computer resources. This leaves problem solving. Your hard disk may be full; your motherboard may have only old, slow version 1 USB ports; or your bank may require a recent version of Quicken for on-line banking.

You shouldn't upgrade to Windows Vista unless you replace the PC, and even then you may have problems. A friend of mine bought a new Dell PC with Vista and found his old printer wouldn't work and he could no longer access the Internet. Operating system designers can't possibly test every combination of hardware and software. As a result, they concentrate on new components, since most operating system sales are for new computers, and there may be problems with older peripherals and software.

You should back up all your files before you make any system change, no matter how trivial. And any time you open your system case, you should use a grounding strap to avoid damaging components with static electricity. This is especially important during the approaching winter months, when the humidity in your house is low.

Let's look at the easy upgrades first. Adding RAM is usually not difficult; just plug it in and look at your CMOS screen to be sure the PC has recognized it. (Of course you must use the correct chips. Check your PC manual.) You can usually add new peripherals, such a CD-ROM, DVD, or a second hard disk drive without problems, although if you have already filled all of the available ATA slots, you will have to add a second disk controller. Take your system to a reliable shop if you have doubts about your abilities. Replacing a hard disk is somewhat more difficult, because you must transfer all your software to the new unit, which requires disk copying software. You can't just copy your files with Windows Explorer.

More adventuresome is installing a new motherboard. Be aware that upgrading your motherboard may not result in a noticeable performance improvement unless you also upgrade your hard disk and/or your video controller. If your current motherboard is very old, you must also upgrade its case and power supply. Changing the video controller or monitor is also not too hard. Most monitors are plug-and-play so Windows should automatically recognize your new monitor.

When you buy new peripherals, be sure you get any drivers they need. Many PC manufacturers don't include a complete Windows, but strip off all the drivers except for the equipment they sell you. If necessary, download any missing drivers from the Internet before you change your hardware.

An alternative to an upgrade is a complete new system, and the vendor will insure that all the software and hardware plays well together. This leaves your old system intact so you can transfer your files without risk of losing anything.

Regardless of your approach, you must also choose where and what to buy. Where is a choice between mail order and a local dealer. What is a choice between name brand and commodity hardware.

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The choice between mail order and local dealer depends on how much experience and time you have. The low profit margins in PC hardware mean that both component manufacturers and system assemblers spend little time on testing. Dead-on-arrival hardware and infant mortalities are common. When this happens you are entirely dependent on the company that sold it to you. If you purchase from a mail-order firm, you must either trouble-shoot any problems yourself or ship the entire system back to the seller, while a good local dealer can often make repairs in a few hours. You are trading off convenience for cost, because using mail order can often save you a few dollars.

Name brand hardware costs more than its commodity equivalent. The difference is between Sound Blaster and "Sound Blaster equivalent". I favor name brands. You can be sure that every vendor of software that uses sound has tested its products with Sound Blaster cards, but it is impossible for a small manufacturer to test its sound card with every program.

The less you pay for a system, the more likely it is to contain commodity parts. System manufacturers and assemblers usually purchase components on an Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) basis, and most parts sold at computer shows are OEM. The cost of these is less because the dealer relieves the manufacturer from all customer support. This means that the component manufacturer often won't even talk to the end purchaser. Your only warranty is from the seller, and you must select him or her with care.

Finally, schedule any upgrade when you have some time. Plan on taking a weekend for simple jobs and more for complex ones. I've found that I need a couple of weeks (not full time of course) to get my PC fully functional after reinstalling an operating system for example.

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About Trading Post

Noncommercial Advertising

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Commercial Advertising Specifications (Per Issue)

Full Page (8.5" x 11")*	\$50.00
Half Page (5.5" x 8.5")*	\$30.00
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Business Card (2" x 3.5")	\$10.00

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*Allow for 0.5 inch margins

Notable Notes

contributed by Don Steele, <http://www.frpcug.org>

How to disable a stolen mobile phone.

Locate your cellular phone's serial number by keying in the following digits on the keypad: * # 0 6 #. A fifteen digit code will appear on the screen. This number is unique to your handset. Write it down and keep it somewhere safe. If your phone is stolen you can call your service provider and give them this serial number code. They will then be able to block your handset, even if the thief changes the SIM card. Your stolen cell phone will be totally useless. You probably won't get your cell phone back, but at least you know that whoever stole it cannot use it or sell it. If everyone did this there would be no reason to steal mobile phones.



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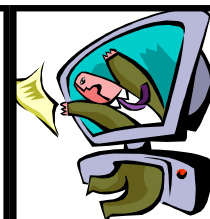
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Front Range PC Users Group is Online at

<http://www.frpcug.org>



k-Byte

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RECYCLING MADE EASY

contributed by Rick Mattingly, <http://www.frpcug.org>

The Staples store chain is now accepting computer components for recycling. A charge of \$10 for large items applies. There is a new Staples now open at the Loveland Outlet Malls. Connect to this link for details: <http://apnews.myway.com:80/article/20070521/D8P8OES00.html>

