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Date: 7/27/2005 3:29:07 PM
Subject: electronic permitting

Chuck please forward this to all members of the sub committee.

I recently received a letter from the Division of Oil Gas and Mining outlining their recommendations for an electronic submittal. The cost of setting up a computer with the recommended software may be discouraging for some of the mines. I wrote this letter to inform you of alternative open source software that can be used in place of the software DOGM recommended. A good place to find open source software is sourceforge.net

I should note that while much open source software is free, open source does not mean free. Also most open source software is better then its commercial counter part. Most open source software has a community where you can get help in learning the program and with any problems you might have. You can also tell them what changes you want made to it in the next version. For a better understanding of open source and the open source community I recommend you search the web.

Software List

Word Processor (Office Suite)

Open Office- (Free software)

The Division talks about MS word and Word Perfect and says it would be ideal to have a word processor write PDF directly, and hopefully this will be a possibility before too long. Open Office does this. Just click on file and then export to pdf. You don't need a plug in form Adobe Acrobat like MS office does. If you have used MS Office or Corel Office you will fill at home with Open Office. This program can also open any MS office file. Open Office comes with a text document program, a spreadsheet program, a slide show program, and a drawing program. It will replace both Corel office and MS office. Also while both MS and Corel seem to reformat the document based on the version of office or operating system on the computer we have not had this problem with Open Office. We are using two version of the software, the stable version and the prototype of the next release. It doesn't matter what operating system or version the documents always look the same.

PDF reader

Foxit PDF reader (Free) and Cute PDF reader (Free)

While adobe offers a free version of adobe PDF reader I recommend one of the ones above since they take up less room on the hard drive and are faster. Remember Microsoft and Adobe are good at marketing, but not the best at writing programs.

PDF creator

PDFwriter, PDFcreator, and PrimoPDF

These programs will replace Acrobat Distiller. We use Adobe Acrobat 5.0 (\$249.00) on one computer, we use it to set up the bookmarks and the links that the reviewers love. I recommend that if you haven't already bought this you buy Cute PDF (\$49.95 with 72% discount on volume licensing) They claim it can do everything Adobe can and more. I am sure there is a free open source program to replace Adobe Acrobat but I haven't found it yet. If you search source forge for a PDF creator it will return over 100 results. I have not had time to look through them all. If you do and find one please let me know. Here is a list of more PDF programs that look promising but that I haven't had time to try out yet. Panda, PDF Box (looks really promising), PDF map (looks like a good one for maps.)

OCR engine

Simple OCR (free)

No need for Omnipage with this program. I suggest you still use the Division recommend OCR settings.

That does it for creating an electronic submittal I am going to continue my list with other open source software we use.

Image Editing

Irfonview (free)

Gimp (free)

Internet Browser/email

Firefox (free) – I highly recommend this program to replace Internet Explorer. Never worry about spyware or popups again. It has thousands of extensions and themes you can get to customize it. I can give anybody interested a list of recommend extensions. This is a thousand times better then IE, even if it wasn't you should switch for security reason, just search the web for a comparison of the two programs.

Thunderbird (free) – Again a highly recommend replacement for Outlook. Take care of junk mail and viruses. This also will solve a lot of security problems and it is just better. It has an extension called Calender to match the Outlook version of Calender but it can do multiple calenders. I don't have the Calender extension, I use Sunbird, the Stand alone version. If you use Thunderbird or Sunbird I recommend the tray extension for both of them so when you minimize it drops to the system tray instead of staying on the toolbar. I don't know what Outlook couldn't figure out that this was a good idea.

Using the Mozilla programs a talked about above will make it almost impossible for spyware or a virus to get on your computer unless you intentionally tell one of them to download or install one.

Calenders

Rainlendar (Free)

Sunbird (Free)

Project Organizer

Gant Project (Free) – Throw Microsoft Project out the window install this free on any computer. This program requires the free sun java program.

File Compression

UltimateZip (Free) – I haven't yet found a zipped file that it couldn't open. It even opens the rare .trz files.

Media Player

VLC media Player (free) – This will also play image files (see below)

DVD/CD copying

*Remember current copy write laws allow you to make one (1) backup copy of a CD or DVD that you bought.

DVDshrink (free) – This is a great all in one program. Commercial DVD are 9.6 gig while the most common and cheapest DVD-R are 4.7. This program will copy the DVD and compress it down so you can burn it to a \$0.20 DVD. If you have ever bought a \$50 training video you understand the need for this. Copy the original then file it away and let the 20 cent copy get destroyed. This works good for home DVD's to. Let the kids play frisbee with the 20 cent copy while the original is filed safely away. This program can copy the supposedly copy protected DVD's also. You can then make a new DVD or an image file.

Clone CD – This program is not free, but it can take any copy protected cd and copy it to another cd or an image file.

Clony XXL (free) – Will scan a copy protected cd and tell you what settings to use with Clone CD in order to copy it.

Deepburner (free) – Burns any image file to cd or DVD.

CD/DVD Rom emulators

Daemon Tools (free) – This will create up to 4 virtual CD/DVD drives on your computer. This is great for programs that require you to have the cd in a drive in order to use it. You copy the cd to an image on your computer and then file it away where it won't get ruined. You then mount the image with daemon manger and the computer thinks the cd is in a drive. Make sure you have the Emulation safedisk option checked

otherwise the computer will still keep asking you to insert the original. I recommend selecting Emulation and checking all options so that no matter what image you mount it will work fine. It just make take a little longer to mount it.

This concludes my list. I hope you forgive any misspelled words since I didn't have time to proof read it. Also I recommend that once Microsoft release their new Longhorn operating system that you switch over to a free version of Linux instead of Longhorn. You can search the Internet to find many reasons why. And also if you have to learn a new operating system it might as well be a free one. Also if there is a program you are using and you would like to know if there is a free open source competitor let me know the program name and I will tell you of any I know about.

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