

Random Bits

Licking County Computer Society

VOLUME 24

JANUARY/FEBRUARY
2011

ISSUE 1



<http://www.lccsohio.org>
<http://lccsohio.org/meeting.htm>
<http://www.apcug.net/>



SPECIAL NOTICE

From the President
Jim Amore

We have a date for our recycling event so mark your calendars (and I will be making one up soon for our web page). The dates are 20 and 21 May.

The Friday and Saturday schedule is 8am till around 4 pm. We set up the canopy, tables, pallets and COFFEE first. There will be some work inside and some outside and everyone is welcome for as long or as little time as you can spare.

You should watch the evaluation team go through the computers we receive if you want to know something about the inside of your computer. Everett, Bob and others are happy to talk to you as they open the computers and determine their condition and worth.

A flyer is available on our LCCS web site

and [here](http://lccsohio.weebly.com/recycling-flyer.html).
<http://lccsohio.weebly.com/recycling-flyer.html>

Repair Help Desk, formerly referred to as Repair SIG (Special Interest Group), Sunday meetings have been canceled until further notice. We frequently found ourselves at the A-frame two days in a row and have decided we can serve the members without Sunday meetings.

All SIGs have been renamed Help Desks to better describe what we do at a SIG meeting.

Our LCCS Web Board

The Web Forum is underused by our membership.

Don't get me wrong, I get good information and have provided information in return. Here is where I think we can do better...We have only 94 members signed up for the forum. There are over 200 paid members so, where are the rest of you?

If your computer isn't running well or you like to know of any good prices or you like to read tips or information then the forum could be of use to you. We have a special section called "Boards" for "Deals" where we share hot deals and interesting items for sale. Another "Board" covers the Executive and General Meeting Minutes so you can see how the club is being administered.

-Here is a list of the "Boards":
 -LCCS General Information
 -Linux
 -Repair
 -Software
 -Executive/General Meeting Minutes

-Programs/Meetings *
 -Operating Systems
 -Hardware
 -Deals
 -Digital Imaging

* The Bonus Word area permits you an extra door prize ticket if you know the word and attend the General monthly meeting.

The 94 members of the forum have posted 699 messages on 307 topics. The most replies have been to the AVG (antivirus) subject. We've had questions about email, hard drives, media conversion, and many others.

Joining the forum is fairly simple.

1) Go to <http://lccsohio.org/> and click Web Board or go to <http://lccs.jta27.com/>
 2) Find the "REGISTER" link and left click with your mouse

LCCS Forum

Welcome, **Guest**

Please [login](#) or [register](#).

Forever

Login with username, password and session length

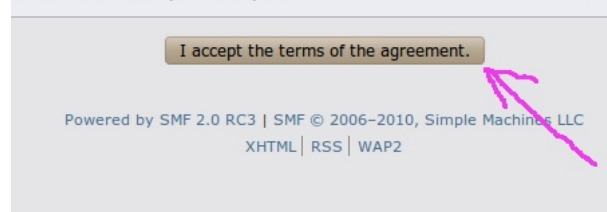
News:

HOME HELP LOGIN REGISTER

3) Click the gray button at the bottom of the next page which says

"I accept the terms of the agreement."

in the event that you need to be banned from this forum or your is
ning bits of information (such as your username and password), in
of information to your computer.



4) Ignore the top section of the next page and fill in the lower section which is the "Registration Form".

--Make up your username to be whatever you like.

--Provide an email. Don't click the little box below if you don't want other forum members to email you directly.

--Create a password

--Type the password again

--Type the letters in the empty box at the bottom. Be sure to use capital letters if appropriate.



--Click the "Register" button



and you should see the message "Registration Successful"

5) You will receive an email when you have been accepted. Usually very quickly.

OK, login and thrash around. Under the Login area there are extra tabs. Click on "Help" for tips on using the forum. Click "Home" to go to the main page any time you get lost.





Our \$500 donation to the Licking County Food Pantry
Wearing the OSU shirt and receiving the check is the Director
Chuck Moore
Left to right are our LCCS members George Hreha(Trustee),
John Kennedy (Treasurer), and Dave Rauch



General Computing Information
Submitted by Your Region 3
Advisor
Robert Lee Vance (Bob)

PUSH articles are provided by APCUG members
and contributors from the personal computer
field.

The articles below are provided as a service
of APCUG (Association of Personal Computer
User Groups). They are good learning tools
and most are quick reads so you don't spend
hours on one subject.

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SOFTWARE FREEDOM DAY APCUG

From APCUG Region 3 Advisor
Robert Lee Vance (Bob)

In January a planning committee met to discuss the September 2011 Software Freedom Day event. The event seeks to promote and educate people about Open Sources And Freeware software, mostly utilized on Linux operating systems but also in many cases available for Windows and Apple operating systems.

Jon Mazur, president of CPUser Group, encourages other User Groups to host a similar event. Or, if possible, several groups from Region 3 and other groups near Pittsburgh might come together to co-host an event. For additional information on the software freedom day visit the following site:
<http://softwarefreedomday.org/>

For additional information you can contact Jon Mazur President of the CPUser Group of Pittsburgh his e-mail is; [Jon Mazur <cjcb@verizon.net>](mailto:JonMazur@cjcb@verizon.net), you can also try CPUser Group [<cpusergroup@hotmail.com>](mailto:cpusergroup@hotmail.com)

SOFTWARE FREEDOM DAY SFD ORGANIZATION

(Excerpt) Software Freedom Day is a global celebration and education of why transparent and sustainable technologies are now more important than ever. With over 200 teams in 60 countries participating, it is a fantastic event to get your schools and communities involved in.

Written by Pia Waugh

FROM WIKIPEDIA

The primary sponsor from the start (Software Freedom Day) was Canonical Ltd., the company behind Ubuntu, a Linux distribution. Then IBM, Sun Microsystems, DKUUG, Google, Red Hat, Linode, Nokia and now MakerBot Industries have joined the supporting organisations as well as the FSF and the FSFE. IBM and Sun Microsystems are currently not sponsoring the event. In terms of media coverage SFI is partnering with Linux Magazine and Ubuntu User. Each local team can seek sponsors independently, especially local FOSS supporting organisations and often appears in local medias such as newspapers and TV[3].

SOFTWARE FREEDOM DAY
[OpenDisk](#)

theopendisk.com
[About](#)

OpenDisc is a high quality collection of open source software (OSS) for the Microsoft Windows operating system.

The two main goals of the project are:

- * To provide a free alternative to costly software, with equal or often better quality equivalents to proprietary, shareware or freeware software for Microsoft Windows.

- * To educate users of Linux as an operating system for home, business and educational use.

The majority of programs featured on OpenDisc are also available on Linux.

<http://www.theopendisc.com/>

SOFTWARE FREEDOM DAY
OpenEducationDisc

OpenEducationDisc

The OpenEducationDisc is a modification of the OpenDisc format by Teachers and Computer Specialists with a passion for education. The purpose of it is to provide students with the software that they need to complete school work at home. Most students don't have jobs and it is unfair to ask for them or a parent/guardian to buy expensive software to get the best out of their education. Hence everything is free and we encourage you to make copies of this CD and lend it to you friends.

The project was started in 2007 by Mr. Kemp, a Computing Teacher in London, UK. It is now thriving in schools across the globe and was the 2006/2007 winner of the Teach First School Projects Competition.

<http://www.theopendisc.com/2010/10/openeducationdisc-10-10-released/>

Health Care Information Source

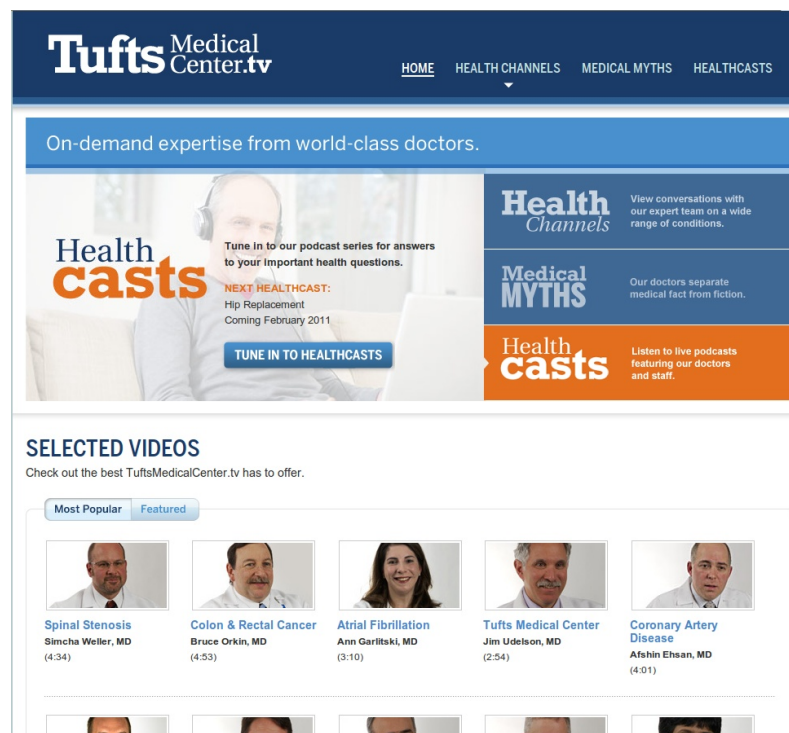
<http://www.tuftsmedicalcenter.tv>

This is the primary teaching hospital for Tufts University in Boston. Follow the links to online video presentations. They provide new information and they have a section to debunk some of the medical myths floating around.

Want to learn more about a doctor, nurse or team member featured on this site? They are all listed alphabetically on this page:

<http://www.tuftsmedicalcenter.tv/doctors/#JimUdelson>

I find myself visiting medical sites more and more. Sorting out the good info from the bad can be a chore but I stick to universities and hospitals associated with universities. Do you have an online medical site you recommend? I'll publish a list if I receive suggestions at newsletter@lccsohio.org.



TEACHING COMMITTEE

George Hreha, Chairman of the Teaching Committee, reports there were 348 students enrolled in the last session of computer classe at Zerger Hall.

As a teacher (K. Bixler, Introduction to Linux) I can tell you the other teachers and I enjoy sharing what knowledge we have with the students. If you have a few hours a week and want to learn something or brush up on something, then I suggest one of our classes.

The session beginning the week of March7 will have classes covering:

Windows 7
Windows XP
Windows Vista
Internet/Email
Spreadsheets
Word Processing
Introduction to Linux (Ubuntu)

Call Zerger Hall, 345-0821 to schedule a class.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report as of 15 January,
2011

Cash Drawer	0.00
TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts	17,517.81
TOTAL ASSETS	17,517.81
LIABILITIES	0.00
OVERALL TOTAL	17,517.81

John Kennedy, Treasurer, reminds us these funds must last until the next membership dues collection in June. Membership renewals for everyone are due at the same time. This has reduced the volunteer workload for the Treasurer and Membership Chair.

Carolyn Clark, the new 2011 Secretary, has been working hard to put past minutes our Web Forum site. You may peruse the posted documents in the Executive/General Meeting Minutes topic. The January General Meeting Minutes are below.

General Meeting Minutes, January 18, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 P.M. by President Kemp O'Dell. The minutes of the previous meeting were read by Carolyn Clark, Secretary. Mary Frances Rauch moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mary Ann Higginbotham, all yeas. (2011-001)
Treasurer reported the fund balances total \$17,517. with the fees for classes of \$1,120. Bob Porter moved to approve the report, seconded by Bob Vance, all yeas. (2011-002)

Vicki Atkins reports that the active memberships total 230. Mary Frances Rauch offered to order name badges for members if desired. Must pay in advance and write out the name desired.

O'Dell informed us about the APCUG newsletter posted in their forum and can be accessed there. LCCS is a member, and our members are automatically members. They sponsor conventions and various activities and educational information. You will find a link to this on our web site.

Kennedy told us of the help desk he is offering on Fridays from 9:00 to 11:30 AM depending on weather. The subject is to learn to access our web forum.

Google calendar is being made available to our members for club activities.

Kennedy reported Digital SIG was postponed and attempt will be made to have it next Wed. or Thurs., weather permitting. Repair SIG help desk is planned for Saturday.

Jim Amore presented a program about GPS.

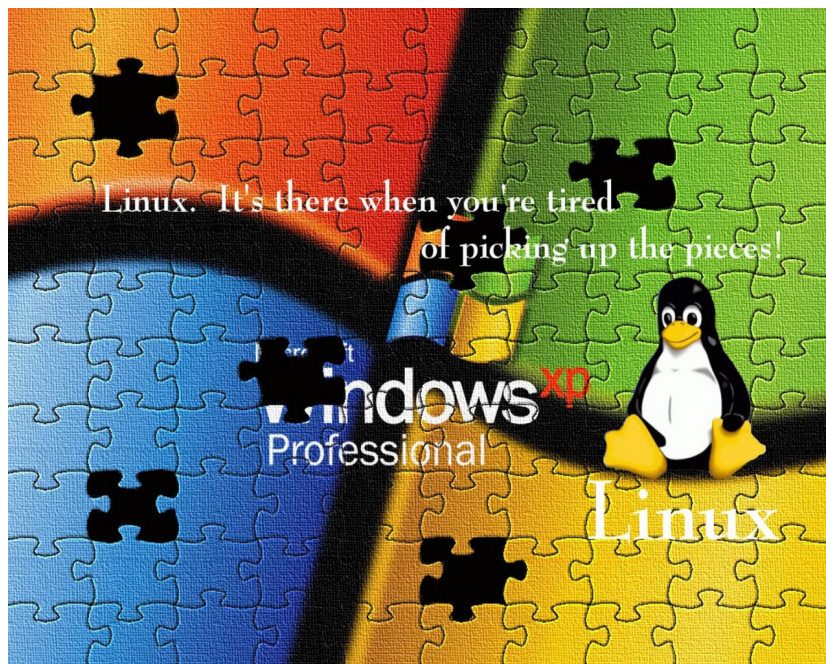
Bob Vance moved the meeting be adjourned, second by Bob Porter, all yeas. (2011-003)

We've had good attendance at our Linux SIG (Help Desk) through the fall and spring. This month though, we had only three attend. Winter weather and no John Kennedy are to blame, I think. Since he isn't here to defend himself I'll just assign the blame to him.

Most of us are now up to speed on the desktop and applications. We have seen a few command line applications in action and more are planned. Linux really shines when you learn the command line because it is much faster and better able to do real work beyond cruising the web.

Speaking of cruising the web; linux has several command line applications for cruising without the risk of picking up a virus or trojan. Lynx can view the lccsohio.org web page and move through the links just fine. No images open and no scripts hatch to install trojans or other malicious bug in my machine. It isn't a fun way to view the web as we normally do but, if you want to go to a suspicious web site and view the links to see what is going on, then lynx is a safe method of doing so.

Ken Bixler
[Newsletter Editor](#)



New to the wonderful world of Linux?

from the LINUX FORMAT MAGAZINE

<http://www.linuxformat.com/>

Looking for an easy way to get started? Download our complete 130-page guide and get to grips with the OS in hours rather than weeks or months. We show you how to install Linux onto your PC, navigate around the desktop, master the most popular Linux programs and fix any problems that may arise.

We put the Linux Starter Pack on sale one year ago, and in our quest to support the community we're giving it away as a free download. Please go ahead and tell everyone about this offer -- all we ask is that you link to this page rather than directly to the zip below.

[Click here to download now!](#)

http://www.tuxradar.com/files/linux_starter_pack.zip

After reading the guide, head over to Linux Format for more information on the world's finest Linux magazine. Each month we include all the tutorials, features, tips and help you need to get the most from your operating system. Don't miss it!

The Linux Link

Your Source for GNU/Linux Web-Radio & Podcasts!

<http://www.thelinuxlink.net/>

Here is a site listing many online linux podcasts and radio shows. Some of these are downright entertaining while others are clearly a couple of guys sitting in their basement talking about linux.

Enjoy

Ken

Firefox and Chrome Extension (Windows, Mac & Linux)

Are you a googler?

Well, you may not be an employee of Google, but I am sure you have used at least one Google service. If you are like me, you are using multiple Google products (from Google search engine, to Gmail, Docs, Calendar, Reader, Picasa and many more). I am sure you will appreciate the beauty of the Google Shortcuts extension for both Firefox and Chrome.



Read the full article [Google Shortcuts Accesses All Google Services In One Click](http://maketechasier.com/google-shortcuts-access-all-google-services-in-one-click/)

<http://maketechasier.com/google-shortcuts-access-all-google-services-in-one-click/>

What is an RSS Feed? (Windows, Mac & Linux)



If you are wondering "What is an RSS feed?" please read on. You are about to learn the ins and outs of RSS Feeds and how to use them most effectively. The orange "button" in the upper right hand corner of this section is the one that represents RSS feeds. You will find many websites that publish an RSS Feed in order to easily deliver content to their readers.

Read the article at:

<http://www.windows-help-central.com/what-is-an-rss-feed.html>

20 Windows Keyboard Shortcuts You Might Not Know

Mastering the keyboard will not only increase your navigation speed but it can also help with wrist fatigue. Here are some lesser known Windows shortcuts to help you become a keyboard ninja.

Global Windows Shortcuts



Win+1, 2, 3, 4, etc. will launch each program in your taskbar. It is helpful to keep your most frequently used programs at the beginning of your task bar so you can open them one after another. This also works in Windows Vista for the quick launch icons.

[Read more:](http://www.howtogeek.com/howto/37176/20-windows-keyboard-shortcuts-you-might-not-know/)

<http://www.howtogeek.com/howto/37176/20-windows-keyboard-shortcuts-you-might-not-know/>

How to Remove and Avoid Computer Viruses

An article from the official Microsoft Safety & Security Center

If you suspect your computer has been infected, the Microsoft Windows website provides step-by-step instructions for removing viruses and other malware. Fortunately, if you update your computer and use free antivirus software such as Microsoft Security Essentials, you can help permanently remove unwanted software and prevent installation in the first place.

Note What you might think is a virus could actually be spyware. Microsoft Security Essentials helps protect against spyware, too.

[The rest of the article:](http://www.microsoft.com/security/pc-security/antivirus.aspx)

<http://www.microsoft.com/security/pc-security/antivirus.aspx>

Phishing scams that target activities, interests, or news events

New phishing scams are generated whenever there is a newsworthy event, such as a natural disaster, a national election, or a significant change in the world financial system.

- * Fake e-cards
- * Fake job opportunities
- * Donation scams

Fake e-cards

E-cards are created the same way websites are: They're built on the Internet, just like this page. So when you send someone an e-card, you send them a link to click, which takes them to the online greeting card you created for them.

This means an e-card you receive could actually be a phishing scam, spam or a spyware installer, or a computer virus.

[Read more:](#)

<http://www.microsoft.com/security/online-privacy/phishing-interests.aspx>

There's a new virus out there. It's pretty nasty but you can protect yourself from it. Google "System Tool 2011" and you'll find numerous sites with descriptions of it. Most of them want to sell you their anti-virus software to get rid of it. I just got hit on Sunday with it -- twice -- and used my free Malwarebytes software to get rid of it. You have been warned!

The below web site gives you a pretty good description of this thing. Its called System Tool 2011 and its really awful.

<http://www.bleepingcomputer.com/virus-removal/remove-security-tool>

Continued on next page

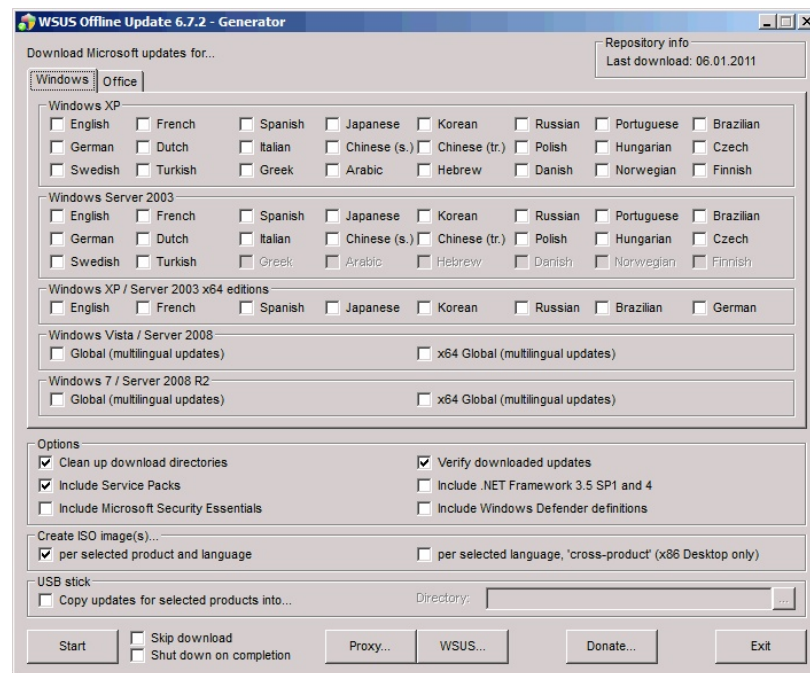
CONTINUED FROM pg15

Next, go to the web site below and you'll find on the left side a Download link for the free version. It doesn't cost anything, is perfectly safe for your computer, is easy to use, and in the event you get hit with this System Tool thing, you'll have it on you computer to get rid of it for you. The web site for the download is:

<http://www.malwarebytes.org>

WSUS Offline Update tool

Using "WSUS Offline Update", you can update any computer running Microsoft Windows and Office safely, quickly and without an Internet connection.



You can download WSUS offline update tool from here
<http://download.wsusoffline.net/>



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 740-924-1925

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Note: Phone numbers listed
 are in area code 740 except
 where listed.

(Approx. 2,116 words)

1BACKING UP AND RESTORING FILES

December 2010 issue, Boca Bits, the monthly magazine of The Boca Raton Computer Society, Inc.

By Ron Hirsch, Member and Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida
www.brscs.org
Ronhirsch1439 (at) comcast.net

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

If I had to pick a single area where most computer users are extremely lacking, it's in the area of backing up and preserving the documents and other items that they generate during the course of their computer activities. Most people just dismiss the subject with "Oh I don't really have anything of importance, and even if I do, I can always redo it easily." These people may only use their computer for the Internet and e-mail. But, redoing your address book and bookmark listing can be a task in itself.

And, if you use a program such as Quicken or Money, you have lots of financial info that would be a real job to rebuild if all your files were lost. I reminded a friend about backing up his Quicken stuff, and he said that he really didn't have to, as Quicken always backs things up automatically, which it does. But it backs things up onto the same hard drive, into a different folder. So, about 6 months later when his hard drive failed, his backup was worthless, and he was a very unhappy person.

WHAT DOES BACKUP REALLY MEAN?

Backup is the generation of duplicate files, often onto a removable medium, for all the things that you have generated on your machine. Generally, these are files that you have produced, not the program files which came on the CD. These duplicate files must be stored on something which can be separated from your machine, and definitely separated from your internal system hard drive.

Since most people have only one hard drive, it does not make good sense to backup onto that same drive. And, if you have your main drive partitioned into say a C and D drive, you will still lose your backup if the drive fails. If however, you have a second hard drive on your computer, you are much safer storing your backups there.

There are online services which offer "online backup" at a small cost, or no cost. This can offer access from another computer, when you might need that data. But I personally don't want my private data et al on an online computer, where it is possibly subject to being hacked or having that operation go out of business.

NOTE: This article is only discussing backup of your personal files and data - it is not addressing a complete backup of your system drive, including your operating system (probably Windows). That is a separate topic which will be covered in another article.

The backup media should be stored in a place where they it will not become lost, stolen, or damaged. When I was in business (many years ago), we backed up all our files every day, with a rotating system of seven tapes. Copies were stored in a fireproof safe, and periodically, we placed a current copy in our safety deposit box at the bank. Just putting copies on the shelf doesn't protect against their loss in case of a fire. Obviously, most users don't have to go to such extremes. But, for important information, it's a good idea to periodically put a backup copy into a secure and fireproof place, such as a home safe, or your safety deposit box.

In order to be able to follow and use the material in this article, you must be conversant with using Windows Explorer, or a similar file manager. Earlier this year, I presented several articles on this activity, with several exercises on the subject. If you are not familiar with using a file manager to copy files and add new folders and subfolders, I would suggest that you bone up on this subject first, and then get back to this article.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO FIRST

First of all, the typical user who has programs in which files are saved, generally has no idea where they are. So, the first thing to learn is just that. When you are in a program such as Quicken, your files are generally saved in the same folder as the Quicken program. Other programs may use the My Documents folder, My Files folder, the Documents and Settings folder, or a special folder that the program has set up to store things.

I personally set my own folders for storing things. And, fortunately, most programs allow the user to specify where things are stored. In WordPerfect, I have a master folder set up, name WPWIN. Under that I have about 56 subfolders for all the categories that I have defined. There is a folder named "BocaBits", which holds all the articles I've written for this publication. One of the main advantages of having your personal files organized in a master folder is that they are easier to copy to a backup medium. Just copy the main folder, specify to include the subfolders (if that is needed), and everything underneath will be copied. This is far easier than having to locate many different folders, and copy from each one individually.

Remember, using subfolders is a must. Some years back, one of my friends stored all his files for all his programs in the same folder, with no subfolders. Finding a file to use was almost like looking for a needle in a haystack. And, name your files using descriptive long filenames which all operating systems since Windows 95 can use. Which is easier to find "Letter to Jack re the new building.doc" or "let2jreb.doc"?

Here are some steps that I would suggest users consider - change the names to suite your desires.

1. Add a new folder on your C: drive, and call it "All My Stuff" (without the quotes.)
2. Add as many subfolders under it as you need. For example, (assuming you have these programs) add one for Word, Quicken, Money, Excel, etc.. Then, add as many subfolders under each of the main subfolders you've added. For example, the "Word" folder can have subfolders named "Letters", "Faxes", "IRS"

correspondence”, etc.. (Don't use the quote marks - they are used here for clarity.)

3. Then in each of those programs go into “preferences” or “settings”, or wherever is appropriate, and set your new path and folder name there as the place to keep stuff. In something like Quicken, it wants its files where it specifies, but when you call for a backup in Quicken, you can specify the path/folder. So this folder you set up will always have duplicates of Quicken's files, ready to be copied out to the removable media you choose.
4. For programs such as Outlook Express or AOL, it's a good idea to save your address book, and your bookmarks. Finding the names of these files, and where they are located will be a good exercise for you in using Windows Explorer, and learning more about your browser.

NOTE: It is not absolutely necessary to do all of these previous steps if you're willing to do your backup work with all your files where they are now. These steps are just offered to make your job of backing up easier. If this is the case, you can skip to the section entitled “WHAT MEDIUM SHOULD I USE TO BACK THINGS UP.”

HOW DO I GET MY EXISTING FILES INTO THESE NEW FOLDERS

If you don't know or can't find where the program stores the files you create, go into the program, generate a new document, and do a save on it. When the “save” window comes up, it may well show you the path/folder that the program uses. So you can now go to that folder, and find all the stuff you have done previously. While you're in the “save” window, you can now specify your new repository for your files in this program, assuming it will cooperate.

If this does not happen, do a search in Windows (START>SEARCH) to find that file, and the location path will be available there.

Rather than move the existing files, I'd copy them into the new folder you set up. That way, if there are any “goofs” (perish forbid), nothing has really been lost. In the case of a program like Quicken, just open Quicken, and press CTRL+B. This should open the backup window, and you can type in the path/folder you've just made.

Later on, when you know that everything has been safely copied into your new folder tree, you can safely delete the files in their original locations if you want to do so.

When you've done this for all your important stuff, you will now have a new “filing cabinet” with “drawers” for all your important files.

WHAT MEDIUM SHOULD I USE TO BACK THINGS UP?

In the “olden days”, the choices were fairly limited. Floppy disks and tapes were about it. These days, those two media are not the ones of choice. Floppies have limited storage space, and most people don't have a tape drive, nor should they bother to get one these days.

The two choices that I would recommend are external USB drives, which many people have or flash drives which many people also may have. If you're not familiar with these

devices, you should become familiar - they are very inexpensive now and are the perfect media for backing up purposes, transporting, and archiving files.. Or you can use a ZIP disk, if you have a ZIP drive, or use a CD rewritable disk.

To “burn” a CD, you must be familiar with this process. If you have a recordable or rewriteable drive on your machine, there should be a software utility to handle copying files. Usually this utility is on the CD that came with your hardware. But, it's possible that the utility wasn't loaded on at the factory. Check through the manual or help files to learn more about this.

Remember, once you get into the habit of backing things up, you can feel more comfortable about not losing lots of time and effort trying to reconstruct things. And, when you get a new computer, your new machine can take the backup medium you used, and copy it all (as desired) onto the hard drive of the new machine.

ONE FURTHER RECOMMENDATION TO SAVE YOUR “STUFF”

One area that most users don't bother to consider, is the use of an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). These units plug into your wall outlet, and then the computer and monitor plug into it. Many don't feel that this is of any value to them, but I'll bet that they've had a crash during a power blink. The primary use of such a device is to keep your computer and monitor running when there is a power failure, either an extended one, or momentary power blink. The purpose of a UPS is not to allow you to keep working for an extended period when the power goes off, but to allow you to save your work, and shut down in an orderly fashion. Or, when the power “blinks”, your system doesn't crash, and you lose the work that you have on screen. Even a one tenth of a second blink can wipe out what you're working on. And, if you haven't just saved it, you've lost it.

Furthermore, all computers should be connected via a high end surge protector to protect against line fluctuations and power surges. A UPS is also just about the best protection that you can use here. And, these days, UPS units are available for not much more than the cost of a good surge protector. Check Costo for some good values here. A capacity of 300-500 VA is a reasonable range for most home computers. Remember, as a minimum, you need to have your computer and monitor connected via the UPS. Without a monitor, your computer isn't good for much.

So, HAPPY backing up - try it. The day will definitely come when you'll be glad you did. And once you get to be an expert at it, you can impress your friends by teaching them. If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site www.brcs.org. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a looseleaf notebook for future reference.



(Approx. 752 words)

BeWARES!

By Berry F. Phillips, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City

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The wares have often perplexed computer users with numerous decisions regarding software. The multitude of wares have been even more confusing. Comware is commercial software which generally has more "bells and whistles" but requires the highest financial expenditure without the option to try the software in advance. Trialware is usually characterized on the Internet as a free download for a limited time but requires a purchase to continue using the software. Shareware is also free to download but often has features turned off or has an expiration date unless you purchase the software. Trialware and Shareware do offer an opportunity to use the software before making the decision to purchase. Freeware is free for personal use on the Internet but it may contain adware, viruses, or be poor software. Further, the marketing promotion of the wares can be even more misleading, causing you to download and then delete software that you thought was freeware when you discover it is, in fact, pay ware.

The world of wares can be very frustrating as well as expensive to the computer user. One can spend considerable time, frustration, and even expense downloading and deleting various wares on the Internet. Beware, retailers will not accept returned comware after it has been opened for a money back guarantee. Relax, my holiday gift to my readers is a solution to the problem that I have used for several years, saving me considerable time and money! However, I have had to endure personal comments from some of my fellow computer users that I am "cheap!" Since my ancestry is Scottish who are known for being thrifty, I do not consider that comment an insult. However, I do prefer the use of the word "conservative" to the rather blunt, "cheap."

Excluding my operating system, I have nothing but freeware downloaded from the Internet on my system! Aha, you are thinking, but what about adware, viruses, or poor freeware, and the considerable time in downloading and deleting it takes to find the best freeware on the Internet? There are several sites that contain only freeware. However, I recommend Gizmo's Freeware site because I have used it for several years and found it to be very effective in reviewing freeware and efficient to use in going quickly via links to safe and secure freeware sites for downloading. I am reluctant to recommend other sites that I have not used for purposes of this article.

Gizmo's Freeware is easy to use and makes it very simple to locate the best freeware on the Internet because it is extensively reviewed before it is recommended. Until July 2008 Gizmo was the editor of "Support Alert", a highly recommended technical

newsletter that was distributed to over 150,000 subscribers. The site evolved from his highly popular list of the "46 Best-ever Freeware Utilities." The site grew well beyond 46 and reached the point that it could not be maintained by one person. Today, the site has grown into a kind of Wikipedia for Freeware utilizing contributions of dozens of volunteer editors who edit and moderate suggestions from thousands of site visitors. As a result, the range of free software covered by the site is ever increasing and the quality of the reviews are ever improving. Gizmo's Freeware has, in a real sense, become the "Wikipedia for Freeware." I strongly suggest you check your freeware on your system against the recommendations of the best and consider downloading the best.

The primary purpose of Gizmo's Freeware is to make it easy to select the best freeware product for your particular needs. The best freeware programs are as good or better than their commercial counterparts but finding the most appropriate programs can be challenging. There are dozens of freeware download sites but few of these actually help you select the best program for your needs. The site has no downloads just honest advice and useful guidance. Links are provided where you can safely and securely download the product you want. Furthermore, you will know that what you have selected is the best available. Gizmo's Freeware is easy to use and will save you time, money, and lots of frustration!

BE SURE TO BOOKMARK GIZMO'S FREEWARE BECAUSE YOU WILL USE IT FREQUENTLY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS -- SAVING YOU MONEY, TIME, AND LOTS OF STRESS:

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/>

(Approx. 817 words)

Broadsides

February 2010, The Space Coast PC Journal

By Ron Broadhurst, Member of the Space Coast PC Users Group, Inc., Florida

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Dear friends,

These ideas are compiled from years of accumulations from various magazines, books, on-line sites and my own personal experience. I claim neither originality nor ownership to any of its contents. My only intent is to share the various "tips," "tricks" & "hints" in hopes of helping & maybe enhancing your computing experiences. They are all intended for anyone who uses a PC. It is for beginners as well as advanced users.

Enjoy and use as you will.

DEFRAGMENTATION EXPLAINED

Fragmentation is caused by creating and deleting files and folders, installing new software, and downloading files from the Internet. Computers do not necessarily save an entire file or folder in a single space on a disk; they're saved in the first available space. After a large portion of a disk has been used, most of the subsequent files and folders are saved in pieces across the volume.

When you delete files or folders, the empty spaces left behind are filled in randomly as you store new ones. This is how fragmentation occurs. The more fragmented the volume is, the slower the computer's file input and output performance will be, and there will be a significant degradation in performance.

Defragmentation is the process of rewriting non-contiguous parts of a file to contiguous sectors on a disk for the purpose of increasing data access and retrieval speeds. Because FAT and NTFS disks can deteriorate and become badly fragmented over time, defragmentation is vital for optimal system performance.

In June 1999 the ABR Corporation of Irvine, California, performed a fragmentation analysis and found that, out of 100 corporate offices that were not using a defragmenter, 50 percent of the respondents had server files with 2,000 to 10,000 fragments. In all cases the results were the same: Servers and workstations experienced a significant degradation in performance.

CAN'T USE THE XP THEME

The most probable reason for this is that the Themes service isn't running. If it's not running, XP reverts to the classic style. Do this:

1. Click Start | Run and type services.msc to open the Services console.
2. In the right pane, find the Themes service and Click the Start Service button.

If that doesn't work, try this: right click My Computer | Properties. In the System Properties dialog box, click the Advanced tab. Under Performance, click Settings. Click the Visual Effects tab. Select "Use Visual Styles on Windows and Buttons" in the Custom box.

HOW TO SET XP TO DISPLAY THE SHUTDOWN MENU WHEN YOU PRESS THE POWER BUTTON

By default, when you press your computer's power button, the system shuts down. That can be a problem if it sometimes gets pressed accidentally. You can configure XP to instead display the shutdown menu, giving you the option to choose whether to shut down, restart, etc. Here's how:

1. Right click an empty spot on the desktop
2. Select Properties
3. In the display properties dialog box, click the Screen Saver tab
4. Near the bottom of the dialog box, click the Power button
5. In the Power Options Properties dialog box, click the Advanced tab
6. At the bottom of the page, under "When I press the power button on my computer," select "Ask me what to do."

FIX VIRTUAL MEMORY

You receive the following error message.....Your system is low on virtual memory. To ensure that Windows runs properly, increase the size of your virtual memory paging file.

1. Click Start, right-click My Computer, and then click Properties.
2. In the System Properties dialog box, click the Advanced tab.
3. In the Performance pane, click Settings.
4. In the Performance Options dialog box, click the Advanced tab.
5. In the Virtual memory pane, click Change.
6. Change the Initial size value and the Maximum size value to a higher value, click Set, and then click OK.

Click OK to close the Performance Options dialog box, and then click OK to close the System Properties dialog box

HOW TO REMOVE SP3

There are a couple of ways to do it. The easiest is to use the Add/Remove Programs item in Control Panel, but if that doesn't work, try this:

1. Click Start | Run
2. Type : `c:\windows\\NtServicePackUninstall\spuninst.exe`
3. Click OK
4. This should start the Service Pack 3 Removal Wizard, which walks you through the steps of uninstalling the SP

If these methods don't work, first restart the computer and then use System Restore to roll back to a restore point that was prior to the time you installed the service pack (this will also undo any other changes that you've made since that time).



(Approx. 1,433 words)

Circuit WriterVersion 7.3

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Come On, Let's Get Real

Not too long ago, I subscribed to Wired Magazine. I've read Wired on and off over the years and thought it would be fun to get it again, so I did a deal for Wired in exchange for a few airline miles. Naturally this was online. I have yet to receive my first issue, but I have begun to receive email marketing. The first ad was for GQ Magazine and those of you who attend the general meetings can attest that my fashion quotient is an absolute zero and I have even less interest in GQ.

This is not SPAM; I subscribed to Wired and GQ is another Condé Nast publication, so I click the link at the bottom of the email "to remove this e-mail address from future Wired e-mail promotions". The resulting web page allows me to remove my email address, or not, from both Wired and GQ marketing. I choose both and click Submit. The confirmation is below:

Thanks! Please allow 10 business days for your subscription for Wired to be removed.

Thanks! Please allow 10 business days for your subscription for GQ to be removed.

Can you believe this? Ten days! How are they updating the database? By snail mail? A one day lag I can see, but ten? And they call themselves Wired...

The Droid Does

Please forgive me if this column seems a little narcissistic, but I don't buy a new toy every day. After a year of waiting for an iPhone that works on Verizon, the Droid has appeared instead. So I bought one. The Droid is a new smartphone to compete with the Apple iPhone. The Droid is manufactured by Motorola and is available only on Verizon.

It took four tries to get the transaction thru on the Verizon Wireless website on the Friday it was released. Because I have been off contract for several years (I saw no need to "upgrade" my old Motorola E-815 phone), I was eligible for the "New every 2" sucker deal. For the Droid this meant an additional \$100 off after the \$100 online discount which brought the phone down to a relatively affordable \$99.99 – fifty bucks less than a refurbished 3GS and no one else's DNA to wipe off!

The last step in the order process is the dreaded "confirm" step. After that click, the website displays a nearly blank screen with a revolving arrow thing in the middle and a

message that this could take a few minutes. I let one of them run for half an hour before closing the browser window. So that evening I called Verizon to see if any of my orders had gone thru. None had, but the pleasant customer service lady said she would have the phone order people honor the online price. I suspect the phone order guy worked on commission because he was not as friendly. When he told me that I would have to pay for the overnight shipping that was free on the website, I started to enter another web order and, lo and behold, it completes right away. Sorry phone order guy.

So on Monday morning I'm headed for a client site and meet my FedEx driver at the bottom of the hill. He recognizes my car and stops to tell me he has a package for me and it requires my signature. Always be nice to your delivery people so they will be nice to you!

So why get a Droid (short for Android, the Linux-based operating system from Google) and not an iPhone? Well, only time will tell if I made the right decision but the number one reason I did not buy an iPhone 3GS when it came out is AT&T's lousy 3G coverage in New Milford. Even the phone service has gaps. The AT&T coverage map shows only three small spots with 3G in New Milford. One is the AT&T store and I cannot figure why the other two exist but none correspond to where I live or do anything. As we discussed during AskDACS a few months back, AT&T has no 3G service on the New Milford green which you might expect to be a prime target. On the other hand, Verizon's 3G coverage pretty much covers the state. If there is cell service, then 3G works as well. I knew this from my old phone which could use 3G services but to which I never subscribed. [Who would want to watch a movie on a 2-inch screen?]

The Droid offers features that the iPhone lacks – like a slide-out physical keyboard, replaceable battery and easily expandable memory (a 16GB microSD card is included). So is the Droid an iPhone killer? In a word – no. But it is a credible device with good support thru Google and the Android open source community. Top of the list of missing items is the multi-touch screen. You zoom in the Droid browser by touching the screen, a plus/minus thing appears and then you hit one side or the other. This is not as good by about seven miles. Also, the keyboard does not autocomplete words as you type so every word must be typed completely with the attendant opportunity for errors. Fortunately the excellent 3.7-inch 854x480 pixel screen makes it easy to see the mistakes. There is a self-proclaimed detailed comparison of the two devices on Technically Personal (tinyurl.com/yhd5mkm) and another on GadgetoPhilia (tinyurl.com/yz6zy35). Google users will appreciate the tight integration of the Droid (and probably all Android devices) with Google. Since I have not been a Googler, this is just another learning curve for me. For instance, I had to finally break down and create a Gmail account. What I will do with yet another email address remains to be seen but a Gmail account seems to be required to use the phone.

The iPhone App Store has been the key thing (in my opinion) driving iPhone sales. Android is the only other smartphone operating system with an established supply of applications and a means to deliver them – the Android Market which is run by Google. I have no idea how many apps are available (a news item says more than 10,000) but

the number of iPhone apps exceeds this by an order of magnitude. Nevertheless, it took me several hours to scroll thru a few categories of just the free Android apps. By the end of the first evening playing with the Droid my scroll finger was tired and sore. During this period I learned that not all Android apps will run on all Android devices. The Droid runs the brand new version 2 of the Android OS and this alone is sufficient to cause some apps to “close unexpectedly”. To the credit of the OS, only once did a crash leave the phone in an unstable condition. Another difference from the iPhone is the ability to install apps directly to the phone. Significant hacking is required to get around Apple’s lock on applications. On the Droid, this is an option in Setup along with the ability to turn on debugging and developer tools. The only significant security block I’ve found so far is the lack of root access. This won’t last long now that the device is out. All other Android devices have been “rooted” and unlike with Apple and the iPhone there has been no attempt by Google or the manufacturers to prevent this hacking. Another plus for the Droid, in my opinion. Now that there is a higher volume Android device, I predict that the number of available apps will grow as existing iPhone apps are ported to Android and Linux developers jump on the mobile bandwagon.

Integration of my personal software tools with the Droid is coming along but I still need to carry my old and dying Windows Pocket PC PDA for contacts and calendar because I have not installed the software needed to synchronize the Droid with Exchange. That’s next once I finish this column, AskDACS and SIG notes. Another major stumbling block is passwords. I use RoboForm (roboform.com) on all of my PCs and the PDA to encrypt passwords on websites and web-managed devices like routers. I have 413 passwords in 20 folders that I will need on the Droid. More on this next month.

(Approx. 763 words)

Controlling System Restore

By Vinny La Bash, Member and Regular Columnist, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida

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Did a shareware application you were enamored of turn out to be an unmitigated disaster? Perhaps a device driver installation, system update or modification to a registry key went bad, and your system wandered into an alternate universe. Windows has a utility called System Restore that takes a picture, called a Restore Point, of your system before certain types of operations are started. System Restore is a very handy feature that allows you to go back in time to erase actions you have come to regret. If a problem occurs you can revert back to the way things were, and all is well again.

System Restore, for all its utility and convenience, has its drawbacks. Some argue that if there is not enough free disk space, System Restore will fail to create a restore point, so an unsuspecting person may discover that there is no restore point available when trying to put things back to normal. There is also no way to make a permanent restore point that will not get deleted after a time when automatic restore points need the disk space. This could be a predicament if a problem is intermittent.

It is possible that System Restore may be responsible for your disk drive running out of room. While today's super-sized drives make that less likely than a few years ago running out of disk space could still happen, especially if you load up your system with videos. You can reduce that likelihood even further by configuring System Restore properly.

The snapshots we talked about in the first paragraph are taken by a built-in program called the Volume Snapshot Service (VSS). There is no way to access this utility in the standard Windows Graphical Utility Interface (GUI). This means you can't get to it with a menu option. You need to open a Command Prompt window with elevated administrator privileges.

Click on the Start orb located down at the bottom left corner of your screen, select All Programs, and open the Accessories folder. Right click on the Command Prompt icon, and then select Run as Administrator from the menu. That will open up a Command Prompt window with enough authority to configure System Restore.

Before doing any configuration, let's take some time to understand how System Restore works. You can do this with the vssadmin tool. At the Command Prompt type vssadmin /? (Press Enter after typing a command.)

You see a list of all the commands supported by the utility.

(Note: Shadow copy = Restore Point)

Enter the command vssadmin list shadows

This displays a list of all the restore points currently on the system.

The list shadowstorage command displays the amount of disk drive space currently being used to store restore points, how much space is set aside to accommodate restore points, and the maximum permitted size for restore points.

To see what's available on your own system, at the Command Prompt type:

Vssadmin list shadowstorage

Take a few minutes to understand the way the information is displayed. If there is enough free disk space you can store up to 64 restore points before Windows automatically starts deleting old restore points to accommodate new ones.

Making backups is an essential task, but there is no reason why Windows should be allowed to consume every available byte of storage with System Restore points. The default settings allow Windows to run amok but you can reset the maximum value with the resize shadowstorage command.

Here is an example:

Vssadmin resize shadowstorage /for=c: /on=c: /maxsize = 12GB

The /for= switch specifies the disk drive where the storage space is to be resized.

The /on= switch tells Windows where to save the Restore Point.

The /maxsize= switch tells Windows how much space it can use for Restore Points.

If you don't specify a maximum size you are giving Windows permission to do anything it wants. The minimum size is 1GB. I have seen references stating that the minimum size can be as low as 300MB, but I could not verify that information.

After entering the resize command the system needs to be restarted to take effect. Configuring System Restore points won't solve every problem you may have with Windows, but it will give you more control of how Windows allocates resources.

(Approx. 768 words)

"Disk Failure" Scare

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This morning, it happened again. I started the computer in the morning, as I do every morning, and staring me in the face was the dreaded "system disk failure" message. A chill went down my spine. It seemed like this happened only about a year or two years ago. When I thought further, it was 2005 when it happened, almost 5 years ago, so maybe that's not too bad. As I ate breakfast, I rapidly thought about the hardware in that computer. (I currently have 3 desktops that I am using for various activities in the home, but this was my main computer, the one other family members use.) Panic started to set-in. Were the disk drives 160GB, or 250GB? When were they installed? Were they Seagate or Western Digital? What interface is used in that computer? Are they formatted in NTFS or FAT32? Well, if it was the C: drive then it must be NTFS. I'll have to open the chassis and look at the drives. Fortunately, this story has a very happy ending. After breakfast, as I knelt down to look at the desktop chassis, to see what was the best approach to removing the cables and other things around the chassis, I spied a floppy disk in the floppy disk drive. Eureka! XP was trying to boot from the floppy: an impossible task, so it reported a disk failure, obviously. Most desktop computers today don't have a floppy disk drive, so this will probably not happen to most people. However, it got me thinking that the answers to all of the questions I had during breakfast, should be in one place, probably along with a lot of other information that defines the current computer hardware setup. So it's probably not a bad idea to gather all of this information, while the computer is operating, and put a hard copy printout in a safe place. The disk drive information is probably the most important for this kind of failure, but it is a good idea to have all the basic hardware information in one easily accessed place. Here is a list of the things that you might want to have. You may not need all of these so use only those that are pertinent to your hardware setup. (If there's anything that I've forgotten, just add it to the list, and let me know by e-mail.) I'll start with the disk drive information because that is what you'll need if the drive goes down, or you may need if you have to re-install the entire system. (By the way, you can accomplish all of this by using the free program, Belarc Advisor (http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html). Belarc produces a listing of almost all of the following pieces of information and additional information in the computer security area.)

Disk Drive 1

Manufacturer	Typically Seagate, Western Digital, ...
Part Number	e.g. ST3160023A (Seagate part no.)

Date Installed	May be the date of computer purchase
Size (GB)	e.g. 330GB
Rotating Speed	e.g. 7200 RPM (or possibly 5400 RPM)
Interface Type	IDE (Parallel ATA) or SATA
Formatted	NTFS or FAT32
C: drive size	Typically 25GB (for XP) or 50GB (Vista)
D: drive size (if used)	Various

Disk Drive 2

Same as Drive 1

CPU

Type	e.g. Intel Pentium 4, or AMD Athelon
Speed	e.g. 3.2 GHz
Processors	e.g. 2 Only used for multi-core processors (e.g. Intel Core Duo)

Memory

Amount	e.g. 1GB
Type/Speed	e.g. PC133 or DDR2, etc.

Display Adapter (If not on Motherboard)

Manufacturer	e.g. nVidia
Part Number	e.g. GeForce GTX295
Other Information if needed.	

Networking

Computer Name	e.g. "Mary's Computer"
Wired MAC address (if connected to wired Ethernet port)	e.g. 00-34-5A-BC-DF-3F
Wireless MAC address (if used on wireless network)	e.g. 00-34-5A-BC-DF-3F
Router IP address	e.g. 192.168.1.0

USB Devices

External Drive (for Backup)	
--Manufacturer	e.g. Seagate, Western Digital, LaCie
--Part Number	Free Agent (Seagate part no.)
--Date Installed	May be the date of computer purchase
--Size (GB)	e.g. 1 TB (1,000 GB)
--Rotating Speed	Typically 7200 RPM
--Formatted	NTFS or FAT32
MP3Player	
--Part Number	e.g.
--Size	e.g. 4GB
--Other Pertinent Information	
Mouse and/or Keyboard (if connected to USB)	
Digital Camera	
--Manufacturer	e.g. Cannon
--Part Number	e.g. Powershot SX110IS
--MegaPixel size	e.g. 10MPixels
--Other Pertinent Information	

Other USB Devices

Partial Belarc Advisor Printout

BELARC Advisor


The license associated with the Belarc Advisor product allows for **free personal use only**. Use on multiple computers in a corporate, educational, military or government installation is prohibited. See the [license agreement](#) for details. The information on this page was created locally on your computer by the Belarc Advisor. Your computer profile was not sent to a web server. [Click here for more info.](#)


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System Security Status

[CIS Benchmark Score](#)
 **1.25** of 10 ([details...](#))

[Virus Protection](#)
 Up-to-date

[Microsoft Security Updates](#)
 8 missing

Computer Profile Summary

Computer Name: Desktop2 (in B) — FrontRoom

Profile Date: Saturday, January 02, 2010 9:40:47 AM

Advisor Version: 8.1e

Windows Logon: MainUser

In page Links:

[Network Map](#) **new**

[Software Licenses](#)

[Software Versions & Usage](#) **new**

[Missing Hotfixes](#)

[Installed Hotfixes](#)

[Plan for your next computer refresh...
click for Belarc's System Management products](#)

Operating System

Windows XP Professional Service Pack 3 (build 2600)
Install Language: English (United States)
System Locale: English (United States)

Processor ^a

3.20 gigahertz Intel Pentium 4
16 kilobyte primary memory cache
1024 kilobyte secondary memory cache
Hyper-threaded (2 total)

Drives

320.00 Gigabytes Usable Hard Drive Capacity
91.05 Gigabytes Hard Drive Free Space

_NEC DVD_RW ND-3520A [CD-ROM drive]
SONY DVD-ROM DDU1613 [CD-ROM drive]
3.5" format removeable media [Floppy drive]

ST3160023A [Hard drive] (160.04 GB) -- drive 1, s/n 4LJ0T7GW, rev 8.01, [SMART](#) Status: Healthy
ST3160023A [Hard drive] (160.04 GB) -- drive 0, s/n 5LJ1FYHX, rev 8.01, [SMART](#) Status: Healthy

System Model

Enclosure Type: Desktop

Main Circuit Board ^b

Board: Gigabyte Technology Co., Ltd. 8IPE1000P-G
Bus Clock: 200 megahertz
BIOS: Award Software International, Inc. F4 09/06/2004

Memory Modules ^{c,d}

1024 Megabytes Usable Installed Memory

Slot 'A0' has 512 MB
Slot 'A1' is Empty
Slot 'A2' has 512 MB
Slot 'A3' is Empty

Local Drive Volumes

c: (NTFS on drive 0)	26.22 GB	5.38 GB free
d: (FAT32 on drive 0)	133.78 GB	38.98 GB free
e: (FAT32 on drive 1)	159.99 GB	46.69 GB free

(Approx. 944 words)

Editorial Bits

By Patrick Libert, Editor, Danbury Computer Society, CT

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Computers and Healthcare

We have all probably had it "up to here" with the health care debate. Medicine is in the twenty-first century; medical record keeping in the nineteenth!

Pet peeve? When I visit my physician's office, a new computer monitor adorns the exam room. Is it used to access my medical history during my visit? Not in the least! It's much easier to leaf through a copious file folder, unable to find (once again) whether or not I had a recommended exam the previous year. Time wasted: several minutes which could have been better utilized to discuss current health topics.

In my opinion, the only way in which we are going to accelerate this modernizing process is to use the populist approach. Tell your doctor(s), your hospital, your medical insurance company that you **demand** an immediate improvement. You will be pleasantly surprised at the power of a letter or of an email. I do it all the time; so can you!

Social Networking

That relatively new phrase now permeates our daily conversations and actions. The press sometimes depicts this new web-based activity as a waste of time, a fad which will eventually disappear. On the contrary, this is a technological evolution which can help everyone.

Whoa! Hold on for a minute. Let's not just think of this as an online dating service, or an activity reserved for teens. On the contrary, social networking is a remarkable way to communicate with existing and long-lost friends and family with little delay.

In my case, having several siblings and friends in Europe, we are now able to rapidly exchange comments, photo albums and various files thanks to social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. I would even include Skype as a form of social network because we can speak to and see each other and bring our family communications to a degree never before possible without crossing the Atlantic.

Were I not retired, I surely would be actively participating on LinkedIn to broaden my professional knowledge and network.

New and Notable

Readability! (<http://lab.arc90.com/experiments/readability/>)

How cool is this! How many times have you opened the link to a web page and seen a gobbledygook of mixed messages and ads surrounding the article you really want to read?

Install this free bookmarklet in your browser's bookmark bar, click on the bookmark after you have chosen the page you want to see. Abracadabra! All the clutter on the page is removed.

Many of you may already be aware of this site <http://www.komando.com/>. Kim Komando has a syndicated nationwide radio show and columnist. Her site has a multitude of useable information for all computer users, PC or Mac. I have bookmarked many links found on her web site.

Snowtape (<http://snowtape.com/>)

I have been experimenting with the free version of Snowtape. This software allows me to listen to a radio stream and record at my choosing any portion of the broadcast. It then transfers automatically to my iTunes music gallery for future listening. There are other similar applications but, so far, this is my favorite.

Browser Speed

Being primarily a Mac nut, my principal browser is Safari. I also use Firefox and Opera 10.10 regularly. Less frequently, I have used Flock and, very recently, Chrome now that I have an Intel mac.

I like Firefox but find it to be at times a little slow compared to Safari 4. There appears to be a lot more going on in the background with Firefox which may explain the speed differential.

Chrome is mean and lean. It is very fast on my Mac and as it adds more functions and extensions, I may use it more often, ever mindful that as a Google product, it probably is the equivalent of having a spy cam watching all my actions.

Opera continues to amaze me with its multiple capabilities allowing the browser to serve as your email program, your RSS reader and many other functions integrated in the browser. The latest release is version 10.10 but there is much more coming from the developers. I have been a beta tester for Opera since mid-2003 and I can tell you that this is an exciting venture. The speed of the latest version matches that of Chrome but in a much more complex offering. Stay tuned.

Lala (<http://www.lala.com/>)

After reading last month that Apple had bought lala, I joined their site and began to delve into their music library. According to some, Apple's motivation for this investment was to have the capability of having members not only download their mp3 music but to have the option of assembling a music collection "in the cloud." Great idea!

Lala has an extensive music library which one can download to one's computer or, at a much lower cost, buy and add to one's lala "cloud" collection. I used the free 30 song credits offered for joining to save many different songs in my new account. I can sign on to my account on the lala.com site, access my "collection" and play it through my computer. If networked to my home audio system, I can listen to this music in different rooms.

The cost? The price to download a song varies from \$0.79 to \$1.29. However, adding a song to the cloud collection: TEN CENTS! In my opinion, that makes it a very attractive way to compile a substantial collection of one's favorite music.

(Approx. 952 words)

Experiments with Desktop Publishing (DTP) Applications, Part 1
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The word processor is the epitome of ubiquitous—it really does seem to be everywhere. Today's "full-featured" word processor applications do, indeed, offer many features, in addition to allowing you to create text.

Even the most capable word processor, with many features, has limitations, as anyone who has worked on newsletters or other publications has discovered. To get beyond those limitations, you need to use a different category of software application called Desktop Publishing (DTP).

A DTP application is **not** intended for creating text—at least if one is talking about a large amount of text, i.e., many pages. A word processor is the correct application for creating a lot of text.

A DTP application is a layout or design application. It is also called a page assembly application, because you assemble content into a single document. Content includes text, images, drawings and everything else you want to see on the printed (or electronic) page.

True DTP applications are frame-based. This means that all the content on a page is placed into frames. Frames are freely moveable and can be placed reliably anywhere on the page. Text from one frame can be continued (flow) in another. Note that this concept is significantly different from a word processor. When you open a word processor application, all you need to do to create a document is to start typing. With a DTP application, you first have to create and position a frame, then you enter the content.

There are a variety of DTP applications. They range from free to expensive, and the "learning curve"—the time it takes to learn how to use the application—can be lengthy. Choosing a DTP application for your project (or projects) can be a challenge, since it is not easy to compare the features of the various applications. I have used 4 different DTP applications, to varying degrees of detail. I have attempted to capture the most important features (in my opinion) of these 4 applications into 9 categories:

1. General
2. Text Controls

3. Master Pages
4. Tables
5. Graphics
6. Long Document Features
7. Color
8. Commercial Printing
9. Tech Support

The comparisons for categories 1 - 4 are included in this, Part 1, of this article. The remaining comparisons will be provided in subsequent installments. The following information is **only** a collection of comparisons of selected features, based on my testing. It is **not** intended as instruction in how to use the features. Whether you use a DTP application for your work, or, if you do, which application is the best for you, is a judgment you will have to make.

The information in the following table is based on these applications and versions:

1. InDesign: CS3 (5.0.4)
2. Microsoft Publisher: 2007 (12.0.6308.5000) MSO (12.0.6017.5000)
3. Scribus: 1.3.3.13 for Windows
4. PagePlus: SE 1.0.0.5

The following table is not an exhaustive comparison of all features of all 4 programs. It is based partially on my testing and partially on other resources. The entries in the table are a mixture of facts and opinions. Opinions are enclosed in brackets: [Opinion].

	InDesign	Publisher	Scribus	PagePlus
Category				
General	<p>The most capability, the best user interface, best technical support.</p> <p>Available for both Windows and MAC computers.</p> <p>Commercial, expensive.</p> <p>Together with its competitor, QuarkXPress, these 2</p>	<p>Familiar to Microsoft Word users.</p> <p>Windows only.</p> <p>Commercial, can be purchased for under \$100.</p> <p>[Suitable for simple sales/marketing brochures or simple newsletters. Not suitable for complex and/or</p>	<p>Open source (free) and available for Windows, MAC and Linux operating systems.</p> <p>Full compliance to PDF spec.</p> <p>Slow</p> <p>Beta development stage.</p> <p>[User interface needs</p>	<p>Free and commercial versions (only the free version tested). The commercial version sells for US\$100 (online only) by Serif, a company in the UK that is a "Developer and publisher of powerful, easy-to-use desktop publishing, design and graphics software."</p>

	InDesign	Publisher	Scribus	PagePlus
Category				
	applications are graphic design applications standards for commercial printing.	long documents.]	improvement]	Windows only. User interface similar to Publisher.
Text Controls	<p>Comprehensive. All text controls work on selected text.</p> <p>Extensive numerical control over position, size and other characteristics of text frames.</p> <p>Changing size, position or orientation of a text frame is aided with the Reference Point feature.</p>	<p>Similar to Microsoft Word.</p> <p>Not all text features (such as bullets and numbering) in Word can be correctly imported into Publisher.</p> <p>Leading applies only to a paragraph, not to selected text.</p> <p>[Text controls are characteristic of a word processor, not a true DTP application (percentages, not points are used for editing/adjusting).]</p>	<p>Extensive.</p> <p>Leading applies only to a text frame, not to a paragraph or to selected text.</p> <p>No widow/orphan control.</p> <p>No feature that provides vertical alignment of text in a frame.</p> <p>Changing size, position or orientation of a text frame is aided with the Basepoint Point feature.</p>	<p>PagePlus provides more complete import of selected text features (such as bullets and numbering) of a Word document than Publisher.</p> <p>[Text controls are characteristic of a word processor, not a true DTP application (percentages, not points are used for editing/adjusting).]</p>
Master Pages	Master Page features available from the Pages panel.	[Master Page feature not intuitive]	[Master Page feature not intuitive]	[Master Page feature not intuitive]
Tables	Table features are extensive. Tables can cross page boundaries.	Less table features than Word.	Very rudimentary table features.	Inserting a table requires the use of the Table tool, which has a limited selection of pre-

	InDesign	Publisher	Scribus	PagePlus
Category				
				defined formats. Tables from word processing formats can be imported.

(Approx. 1,619 words)

From Rubber Boots to 38% of the Worldwide Cell Phone Market!

By Lou Torraca, President of the TUG (Computer User Group of the Hawaii MOAA Chapter)

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From Rubber boots to 38% of the worldwide cellphone market!

Yup, that's a true fact and the name you will immediately know is Nokia which began in the last part of the 19th century as a rubber goods manufacturer. If you're really curious to know more, register and write a comment at the end of this column and I'll tell you where to get "the rest of the story."

As you can see, this is all about the Consumer Electronics show. Early numbers coming in on the event, which ran from Jan. 7 to 10 in Las Vegas, show that attendance was up year-over-year. CES attendance was calculated at more than 120,000, which was up from 98,495 for the first two days at the 2009 event.



The event also attracted 330 new exhibitors. My feet are still recuperating from all the walking...the press gaggle begins on Tuesday, 2 days before the opening, with meetings and a couple press conferences and then the official CES press event, CES unveiled where a thousand or so press and bloggers are invited to meet a hundred or so exhibitors showing off their “goodies” in the Venetian Ballroom. Then an all-day marathon of press conferences followed by the evening Digital Experience in the Mirage Ballroom where another hundred or so do a similar thing. On Thursday the rush is on as the Show opens and it’s a challenge to not run out of steam before the evening Showstoppers at the Wynn, specially if you were invited to Lunch at Pieros an excellently planned and executed smaller, more exclusive version of the others. So, what follows is mostly a listing of just a few of the many things I was able to see and checkout. Many had not been priced yet and won’t be on the market for a month or two, but keep tuned, as I will continue next time with more as well as updates I may receive on these. You can also Google many of them for more info.

Samsung, Panasonic, LG, Sony and others all debuted 3-D-capable TVs this year, but at prices of \$200 or more above other flat-screen sets, it's not certain whether customers will be buying. Besides, just think about all those glasses you'll need for your Super Bowl bash!



Microsoft Chief Executive Officer Steve Ballmer kicked off this year's keynote sessions with an upbeat take on how his company plans to not only extend its reach in the home entertainment market, but transform the sector as well.



"From the largest screen on the wall to the smallest screens in people's pockets, we are delivering the entertainment people want," Ballmer said.

The space allotted to games at this year's CE event nearly doubled from the previous year, to 13,000 square feet. This year's game-based innovations included a motion-control system from Microsoft dubbed Project Natal and a functioning guitar that can be used in "Rock Band" and "Guitar Hero".



IMHO, The IdeaPad U1 Hybrid from Lenovo is arguably the coolest gadget at the Consumer Electronics Show.



The IdeaPad U1 gives users both a laptop and a tablet in one. Here's how: When the screen and keyboard base are attached the computers works as a 3.8 pound Windows 7 laptop running on a CULV Intel Core 2 Duo processor. But when you detach the 11.6 inch HD screen, that portion becomes a 1.6 pound tablet running on Lenovo's Skylight linux operating system and a 1Ghz Snapdragon processor. It also has 3G embedded and 16GB of solid state memory. The two pieces can work independently because they both have battery power enough for five hours. The base can actually work without the screen as long as you connect it to another display. The two piece can also work in coordination.



The base can share power with the tablet. Users can also begin a browsing session on the full laptop and continue it on the tablet. Users will have to get used to Skylight, which is more akin to the iPhone's app based operating system. And I'm still curious how sturdy the device will be when you keep attaching and detaching the parts. But this is one cool device that makes a lot of sense and lets you enjoy the perks of a tablet while still having the full keyboard and power of a laptop. The Lenovo IdeaPad U1 hybrid notebook will be available June 1 with an estimated retail price of \$999.

On the other hand, for sheer classy looks and price, the NX90Jq notebook sports not one, but two touchpads, one on each side, which should be music to any armchair DJ's ears. This is a home entertainment center-piece both in looks and specifications.



The NX90 has an Intel Core i7 CPU (either 7200QM or 8200QM), an 18-inch 1080p display, an Nvidia GeForce GT 335M graphics card, dual hard drives, and a Blu-ray drive. That config will run you \$2,499. The Asus NX90 will start at \$1,999, and be available sometime in the second quarter of 2010.

My favorite software just keeps getting better all the time! The End of Fragmentation: New Diskeeper 2010 is the only product available today that actually prevents fragmentation before it happens. Utilizing a new revolutionary technology called IntelliWrite™.



2010 benefits:

- Prevents up to 85% of all fragmentation before it can happen
- Operates invisibly without active resource conflicts.
- Boosts read/write speeds above previous limits
- eliminates slow boot-up/patches/downloads
- Significantly reduces power consumption
- Increases productive life of servers, workstations and laptops
- eliminates the need for defrag schedules or "wake up" times
- Cuts back "reactive administration" and Help Desk traffic
- Lowers cost of ownership and has fast return on investment.

The race to be number one in the emerging e-reader device market space is a crowded field as evidenced by product demos and displays during CES. Both tenured vendors, such as Sony, and startups, such as Copia, are developing devices with new features, improved user interfaces and a slew of accessories to meet what they hope will be a robust consumer market.



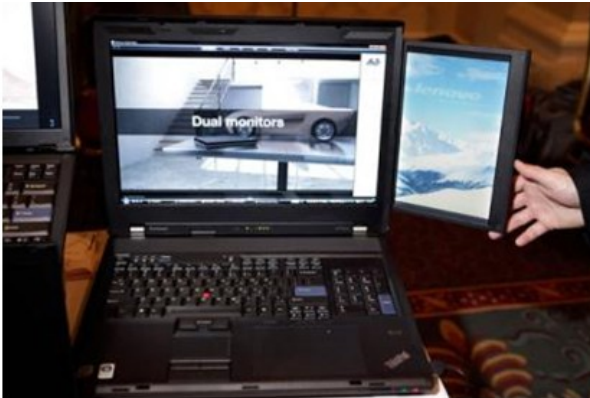
The PlasticLogic QUE was one of the most anticipated product launches of CES 2010. A lot of information had been revealed or leaked beforehand, but most of us tended to think of the QUE as an ereader oriented toward newspapers and magazines and aimed at business professionals. The reality exceeded those expectations as the QUE proReader turned out to be what PlasticLogic CEO Richard Archuleta called a “wireless briefcase.” Not only does the QUE have deals in place with all of the top business periodicals, but it also syncs with Microsoft Exchange, provides “print-to-device” functionality, reads Microsoft Office documents and PDFs, and allows BlackBerry users to transfer data from their smartphones. Unfortunately, there was another way in which the QUE exceeded expectations: the price. The two models cost \$650 and \$800. At that price, it will have to compete with tablet and slate computers.

Amazing what a small projector can do. Compact, lightweight and super mobile, the MPro110 pocket-sized microprojector opens up a whole new world of opportunity for people wanting to present or share digital content on-the-move.



The MPro110 MicroProjector is an LED-driven device that offers full VGA resolution connectivity to a range of multimedia devices. Being a 'pass-through' device, the projector requires an image source device to be connected.

Lenovo's dual screen laptop computer, W700ds is a large, \$5,000 laptop that looks as if it swallowed a netbook. It has a 17-inch main screen, from which a second, 10-inch, netbook-sized screen slides out. Almost like magic {:-}



Why not recharge electronic gizmos while you carry them? BTW, this is NOT just for the ladies! The Concord Keystone 4U2ReUSE Solar Sling tote bag lets you. Made from 100-percent recycled plastic bottles, the Solar Sling features a flexible solar panel and a battery pack with USB connectors. It charges phones, cameras, music players, and other portable gadgets.



The solar cell achieves a full charge after soaking up five hours of full sunlight. The company hasn't announced pricing and availability yet.

D-Link is the first vendor to come out with a dedicated piece of hardware for the Boxee home media management software. The box is oddly shaped, but it won't take up much space when it sits next to a TV. It streams Internet video and connects wirelessly to your computer, so it as well as a long list of supported file formats; you can play virtually any kind of video on it. The Boxee Box will be available for \$199 in the second quarter of this year.



Big-Screen Skype: LG and Panasonic both announced Skype support for their connected HDTVs (equipped with Webcam accessories).



We can look forward to video chat with our loved ones in big-screen 1080p, which could mean the end of calling in underwear and PJs {-}.

Now, here is a relatively small, inexpensive item that really makes sense. Flexicord™ always the right length the award-winning Flexicord™ Single-cord solution for cables up to ten feet in length.



- Shipped as a compact coiled cable
- Can be extended up to 10 feet
- Holds its shape without recoiling
- Full-size Flexicord™ cables include simple re-coiling tool
- 2009 CES Innovations Award Honoree*
- Available in HDMI, USB, S-Video, Network, Composite
- Introducing the Flexicord mini™!

And on that note, I will leave you to ponder this new electronic stuff. Have fun and be careful as usual on the 'net.

Aloha, Lou

(Approx. 960 words)

Neat Things You can do with a Flash Drive

By Vinny La Bash, vlabash@comcast.net, Member and Regular Columnist, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida

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By now you're probably tired of reading about how much better Windows 7 is than Vista. me too, so let's spend some time examining some of the things you can do with a flash drive other than mere data storage. A USB flash drive consists of a flash memory data storage device integrated with a USB (Universal Serial Bus) interface. USB flash drives are easily removable, and much smaller than a floppy disk. They are rewritable, and usually weigh less than an ounce. There is a wide range of storage capacities with the most common being from 2 GB to 32 GB. Higher capacities up to 256 GB tend to be pricey.

One of the most useful things you can do with a flash drive is to run portable applications. Open Office, for example, is a free suite of programs that includes a word processor, spreadsheet, data manager, presentation tool, and drawing package. You can store the suite as a portable application, and run it on any computer that supports Windows. Firefox and Thunderbird are also available as mobile applications.

Having office applications, email, and an internet browser all pooled in a portable drive you can carry on a key chain is a powerful combination. If you want more go to www.portableapps.com for an open source platform that works with iPods and portable hard drives in addition to flash drives. The platform is not only free, but it's a full function site. You are not limited to a trial period or a limited function subset. There is no sign in requirement, and no necessity to provide even an email address. Go for it.

Everyone wants a faster system. With either Windows Vista or Windows 7, the built-in ReadyBoost feature can speed up your computer with a USB flash drive. ReadyBoost takes the storage space on a USB flash drive and converts it into an additional memory cache that supplements the main memory cache on your primary disk drive. It can do this because flash memory is faster than regular disk drives. It's faster because it has no moving parts, and you can get a noticeable improvement in response time. Implementing ReadyBoost is simplicity itself. Insert the USB flash drive into the USB slot on your computer and follow the configuration prompts.

If you work or live in an environment where other folks have physical access to your computer you can use your flash drive to lock everyone else out of your PC. There is no built-in utility like ReadyBoost for this, but you can download a free tool called Predator

from www.brothersoft.com that provides this function. Predator uses a standard USB flash drive as an access control device. After performing a short installation and configuration process, your flash disk becomes a key that will lock and unlock your PC. When you leave your PC remove the USB flash drive. This causes the screen to go blank while disabling the mouse and keyboard. When you ready to resume, put the flash drive back, and everything returns to normal. Move over, Mr. Bond, Predator is here.

All the preceding capabilities are very convenient, but how would you like to carry around a portable operating system? If you are willing to expend a little time and energy you can configure a USB flash drive to be a bootable Windows 7 drive. You will need a flash drive with a capacity of at least 8 gigabytes, and of course a Windows 7 installation disk. Start out by inserting your flash drive into its USB socket and inserting the Windows 7 installation disk in the optical drive. Please make a note of the drive letters. This is essential for successful installation.

Preparing the flash drive is the next step. Click on the Start orb and type: Diskpart

Pressing Enter opens a command window. (After typing a command at the command prompt always press Enter to execute the command.) At the prompt type: List Disk

You will see a list of all your hard drives, partitions, optical drives, card reader drives, and flash drives. Identify the optical drive that contains the Windows 7 installation disk and the flash drive you're working with. For this example we'll assume the flash drive is disk #4, also designated as G and the optical drive is disk #2, also designated as D.

At the command prompt type: Select Disk 4

Run the following commands:

Clean

Create

Primary

Partition Select Partition 1

Active Format FS=FAT32

Assign

Exit

This series of commands erased extraneous material from the flash drive, created an active primary partition, and formatted it with the FAT32 file system. The next step is to copy the Windows 7 installation files to the flash drive.

At the command prompt type: `Xcopy D:*.*/S/E/F G`

In this example D is the drive housing the Windows 7 installation disk and G is the USB flash drive. The command copies the installation files to the flash drive, and when it finishes you have a bootable Windows 7 flash drive. The last thing you need to do to make this work is go into the BIOS and make the first bootable device the flash drive.

Carrying a flash drive around is obviously far more convenient than carrying a DVD, and has the additional advantage of being faster than a DVD. This procedure also works for Windows Vista, but why bother when Windows 7 is here?

(Approx. 451 words)

Nybbles and Bits

By John Pearce, Chair, WebBoard, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, CO
February 2010 Bits of Bytes, Newsletter of the P*PCompAS
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Last month, I mentioned an article in TechRepublic regarding removing old drivers from your system. Little did I know that issue was going surface in my notebook computer that I upgraded to Win 7. The touchpad on my notebook computer has a vertical scroll area at the right side of the pad. I had no problems using the vertical scroll until I upgraded to Win 7 at which point, it stopped working.

I ignored the problem until just after the January P*PCompAS meeting. When I started to investigate and tried to access the settings for the touchpad, there was a pop-up dialogue box telling me that IntelliPoint was blocked from running because of known incompatibilities with Win 7. It took me a few minutes to remember that I had bought a USB mouse and installed Microsoft IntelliPoint software shortly after purchasing the notebook. I had used the USB mouse until I bought a Logitech wireless mouse a year or so ago.

My first thought was to just remove the offending software. Good idea except there was nothing shown for IntelliPoint in the Programs and Features list and nothing for the USB mouse in the Mice section of Device Manager. Connecting the USB mouse made it appear in Device Manager and caused IntelliPoint to appear in the Programs list. I thought I was close to being done. Surprise, surprise! Trying to perform an uninstall of the software produced the pop-up about IntelliPoint being blocked. I wondered how you could uninstall it if it was blocked from running. This time the pop-up dialogue box provided a link to an update and I performed the update. After the IntelliPoint update completed, the vertical scroll on the touchpad worked correctly. However, I decided to remove IntelliPoint because I no longer use the USB mouse and could not think of a good reason to leave the software installed.

This is the first time I can remember where it was necessary to upgrade software just to remove it. I expect the Win 7 upgrade did not upgrade the IntelliPoint software because the USB mouse was not connected at the time the upgrade was performed. Maybe next time I will remember that USB devices should be plugged in during an upgrade and to make the related software and drivers visible. Even better would be to remove old drivers as TechRepublic suggests.

(Approx. 1,011 words)

OAG Joins the Facebook Generation(s)! Part 2

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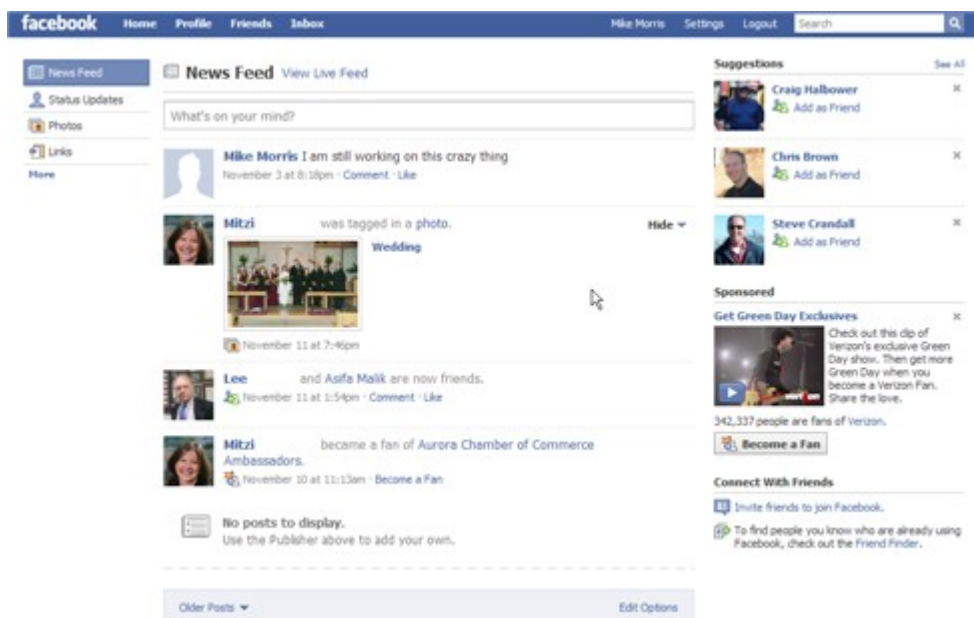
Hello again. This is the Old Analog Guy with Part 2 of my story about joining the Facebook generation.

I need to warn you that I am a novice at this social networking phenomenon—just in case it isn't obvious.

In Part 1 I described the various privacy controls offered by Facebook. In this segment I want to (try and) describe (to the extent that I understand them) the two primary pages of a Facebook account:

- Home Page (also known as News Feed)
- Wall (also known as Profile)

Here is a view of my Home Page:



Here is a view of my Profile (Wall) page:



So . . . what is the difference?

Both have the “What’s on your mind?” field. Both have messages that I have posted and that “friends” have posted (although the list is not the same).

According to Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>): “A user’s Wall is visible to anyone who is able to see that user’s profile, depending on privacy settings.” The Wall can include both text and attachments. Well . . . OK, but that is an unsatisfactory explanation (to me) of the difference between the Home Page and the Wall.

One difference between the two pages is the list of “friends” on the left side of the Wall. If I click on a photo (or name) of a “friend” in that list, I am connected to that “friend’s” Wall (not to that “friend’s” Home Page). In fact, as best as I can determine, I can’t connect to a “friend’s” Home Page, only that “friend’s” Wall. So here is how I see the difference between these two pages (based on my testing, with results potentially different if privacy settings are different):

- My Home Page is a collection of messages posted by me and my “friends”. It is (apparently), only visible to me.
- My Wall displays messages posted by me (and, under certain conditions, my “friends”) and is visible to those I allow access. The Wall is also a link to other “friends.”

- If I post a message from my home page (News Feed), it will be displayed on both my home page and my Wall. It will not be displayed on “friends” Walls. It will be displayed on “friends” home pages (Live Feed but not News Feed).
- If I post a message from my Wall, it will be displayed on my Wall and on my Home page (both News Feed and Live Feed). It will not be displayed on “friends” walls. It will be displayed on “friends” home pages, but only on Live Feed, not News Feed.
- If I post a message to a “friend’s” Wall from my computer (I click on the “friend’s” name or photo that is displayed on my Wall), it will be displayed only on that “friend’s” Wall (not on any other “friend’s” Walls). It will not be displayed on that “friend’s” home page (either News Feed or Live Feed). It will not be displayed on any other “friend’s” home pages. It will not be displayed on my Wall or on my home page.
- If a “friend” posts a message to my Wall from that “friend’s” computer, it will be displayed on my Wall and my home page (both News Feed and Live Feed). It will be displayed on that “friend’s” home page (Live Feed but not News Feed). It will not show up on that “friend’s” Wall, nor will it show up on any other “friend’s” Walls or home pages.

Do you follow all that? I think I have the mechanics of using these two pages correct. However, as I said in my Facebook post, the logic of using two pages—especially the logic regarding what is displayed (or not displayed) on each page—still is not clear to me.

According to the Wikipedia article:

“One of the most popular applications on Facebook is the Photos application, where users can upload albums and photos. Facebook allows users to upload an unlimited number of photos, compared with other image hosting services such as Photobucket and Flickr, which apply limits to the number of photos that a user is allowed to upload. ... Another feature of the Photos applications is the ability to “tag”, or label users in a photo. For instance, if a photo contains a user’s friend, then the user can tag the friend in the photo. This sends a notification to the friend that they have been tagged, and provides them a link to see the photo.”

If you look at my Home Page, you will see that one of my “friends” “was tagged in a photo.” It wasn’t MY “friend” that did the “tagging.” It was a “friend” of MY “friend,” but I received notification, as did, presumably, all of MY “friend’s” “friends.” That message only appears on my Home Page, not on my Wall. Actually, I am not sure why it is displayed on any page of my Facebook account, since I have disabled everything in the “News Feed and Wall” privacy options and in the “Applications” (Photos is an “Application” which I have not installed) privacy options, and limited everything in the

“Profile” privacy options to “Only Friends.” I suspect I don’t completely understand those privacy options.

I need to stop here. Just describing how this thing works starts short circuits in my brain—after all, I am an Old Analog Guy. I will try to describe, in Part 3, how you find “friends,” for those who need more friends, and for whom “old fashioned” telephone and email contacts are not sufficient.

I will end this story with references to some very interesting information on just how pervasive social networking has become—in all age groups of the population.

(Aprox. 1,475 words)

Things, Thinglets & Thingassoes

By Jack Lewtschuk, Columnist, Monterey Bay Users Group, PC (MBUG-PC), California
mbug-pc newsletter, January 2010

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The Bad Guys are after Your Money

Well, that's nothing new.

Just as knowing the "computer language" is good to assist communication when seeking help or offering help to others, so is knowing the definition of words to describe cybercrime.

Just to better understand the nomenclature of cyber assaults, one has to be able to understand the lingo. I researched the Internet (some very helpful "e-letters") and came up with this handy list:

"Adware"

A piece of software that displays advertisements on a computer after the software is installed. Adware can be benign, as in the case of a free program that displays ads in a manner that is agreed upon in advance. Or adware can be a nuisance, displaying unwanted ads with no apparent way to remove the program. The nuisance variety is often silently downloaded along with some other desired software, such as a game or toolbar.

"Arbitrary Code Execution"

When a security vulnerability is discovered in a piece of software, sometimes it is said that it allows for "arbitrary code" to be executed on the machine. This really means that the vulnerability can be used to cause that program to execute ANY set of commands or instructions on that computer.

"Black Hat"

A "bad guy" or hacker who breaks into computer networks, creates viruses, sends spam, or uses unethical tactics to influence engine results.

"Ethical Hacker"

A "good hacker" who uses a variety of techniques to test the safety of a computer network or system software. Typically an ethical hacker (also known as a "White Hat") is

hired by a company to see if there are any flaws in its systems that might allow Black Hats to gain entry.

“Botnet”

A collection of ordinary home and office computers that have been compromised by rogue software. The term “botnet” is short for “robot network” and describes the situation rather well. Computers that have been caught up in a botnet have been effectively taken over and can be used to perform almost any task by the person or persons who control the botnet. Botnets are controlled by criminals and other miscreants whose motives include spewing spam to sell products, operating financial scams, and crippling websites through coordinated attacks. (See “Denial of Service Attack”.)

“Buffer Overrun”

This is a flaw in a computer program that occurs when the length of a user input is not validated. For example, if a program is expecting a 9-digit social security number as input, it should discard any input beyond the 9th character. If the program blindly accepts a longer input string, it could “overrun” the input buffer, thereby trashing some other part of the currently-running program with the extraneous characters. In some cases, this flaw can be used to overwrite the existing program with code that comes from the input string. (See “Arbitrary Code Execution”.)

“Denial of Service Attack”

A concerted effort by one or more remote attackers that attempts to flood a web server or network with meaningless requests. A sustained, coordinated attack can render the target unable to service the legitimate users who are attempting to connect.

“Exploit”

A method of taking advantage of a bug or security hole in a computer program. It is possible that a hole may be known to exist, but no exploit has yet been created to capitalize on it.

“Malware”

Any form of malicious software. This can include computer viruses, spyware, worms, trojan horses, rootkits, and other software that is deliberately harmful, destructive, or invasive.

“Patch”

A fix for a software bug or security hole. When a bug is discovered, often there is a race by software vendors to provide a patch before an Exploit is created. Patches must be applied to the affected computers in order to prevent exploitation of the flaw.

“Phishing”

The act of stealing information using lies or deception as bait. Online scammers try to trick people into voluntarily providing passwords, account numbers, and other personal information by pretending to be someone they trust. An example of phishing is an e-mail

that appears to be from a bank, asking recipients to log in to a rogue site that looks exactly like the real one. When the victim logs in, the operators of the fake site then have that person's login credentials and can access his or her bank account.

“Rootkit”

A rootkit is a software tool (or a set of programs) designed to conceal files, data, or active processes from the operating system. Because of their ability to hide deep in the operating system, rootkits are hard to detect and remove. Although rootkits may not cause damage when installed, they are often piggy-backed with additional code written for the purpose of taking control of a computer, disabling certain functions, or spying on the user and reporting activities back to the rootkit creator.

“Scareware”

Software that is created for the purpose of tricking people into downloading or purchasing it, when in reality it is either unnecessary, marginally useful, or outright dangerous. Online ads that display fake warnings such as “Your computer may be infected—click here to scan for viruses” or “ERROR! Registry Damage Detected—click to download Registry Cleaner” would qualify as scareware. Scareware programs often run a fake or cursory scan, then present the user with a list of hazards that must be corrected. Fixing these “problems” then requires the user to pay a fee for a “full” or “registered” version of the software.

“Skimming”

The act of stealing credit or debit card information while a legitimate transaction is taking place at an ATM (Automatic Teller Machine). Skimming involves an unauthorized device that is attached to the card slot of the ATM, which reads the magnetic strip as the card passes through. A hidden camera may also be used to capture the victim's PIN (Personal Identification Number).

“Spyware”

Spyware is a type of malicious software designed to take action on a computer without the informed consent of the user. Spyware may surreptitiously monitor the user, reporting personal information to a remote site, or subvert the computer's operation for the benefit of a third party. Some spyware tracks what types of websites a user visits and send this information to an advertising agency. Others may launch annoying popup advertisements. More malicious versions try to intercept passwords or credit card numbers.

“Trojan Horse”

A Trojan horse is a malicious program that is disguised or embedded within other software. The term is derived from the classical myth of the Trojan Horse. Such a program may look useful or interesting but is actually harmful when executed.

Examples may include web browser toolbars, games, and file sharing programs. A Trojan horse cannot operate or spread on its own, so it relies on a social engineering

approach (tricking the user into taking some action) rather than flaws in a computer's security.

“Virus”

A computer virus is a malicious self-replicating computer program that spreads by inserting copies of itself into other programs or documents, similar to the way a real virus operates. When the infected program or document is opened, the destructive action (payload) is repeated, resulting in the infection, destruction, or deletion of other files.

Sometimes the infected programs continue to function normally, albeit with the side effects of the virus; in other cases, the original program is crippled or destroyed.

“Worm”

A worm is a malicious computer program that is self-contained and does not need help from another program to propagate itself. It can spread by trying to infect other files on a local network or by exploiting the host computer's e-mail transmission capabilities to send copies of itself to everyone found in the e-mail address book. Some even look in the cache of recently visited web pages and extract other e-mail addresses to target.

“Zero-Day Exploit”

An attack that tries to exploit unpatched security vulnerabilities. The term “zero day” derives from the fact that software vendors sometimes have a window of time to fix a problem before an exploit is developed or before news of a vulnerability is made public. But when the exploit already exists before a patch is released, the vendors have “zero days” to fix it because users are already exposed.

“Zombie”

A computer that has been compromised and can be controlled over a network to do the bidding of a criminal or miscreant. Computers that have been caught up in a botnet are zombies and can be used by the controller of the botnet to send spam or participate in a coordinated denial of service attack.



Cartoon by Regina Doyle, MBUG-PC

(Approx. 1,146 words)

This and That or Things that May Interest You
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Windows 7

Shake

Minimize all windows but one with shake, click and hold down on the title bar and shake to maximize that window and minimize all others. Shake again to restore all.

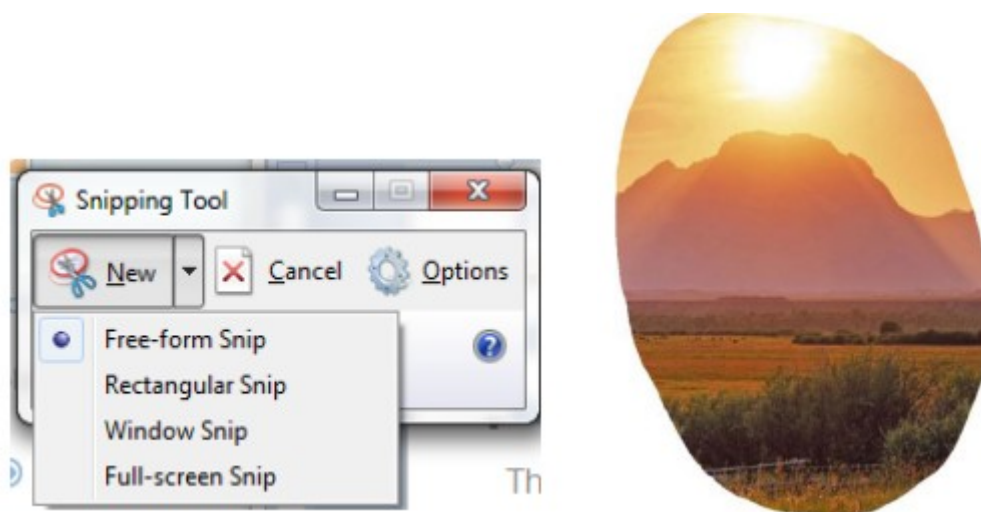
Snap

Snap can display two windows side by side with each filling half of the screen. With one window active press and hold the Windows key while hitting the left or right arrow key. The window snaps to that side. Do the same with the other window but press the other arrow key while holding the Windows key down.

To maximize a window with press and hold down the Windows key while hitting the up arrow key. To restore the window hold the Windows key and hit the down arrow button.

Snipping Tool

The snipping tool has been improved in Windows 7. You can snip a whole window, a rectangular section of the screen, or draw a freehand outline with your mouse or tablet pen. You can save it as a graphic file or annotate with basic drawing tools. And you no longer have the red snipping border.



Windows Mail

Windows Mail can handle a variety of different accounts. So you can set up a single personal email account, or add a work or other personal accounts and even newsgroups. With multiple accounts I like to put each account in a separate folder.

Add a User Account

In Windows Mail click Accounts in the Tools drop down menu. Click the Add button select the type of account to add, click Next, and then follow the instructions inputting the logon and server information for the email account.

Delete a User Account

In Windows Mail click Accounts in the Tools drop down menu. Select the account to remove and then click Remove.

Blocked Email Attachments

To protect your computer from file attachments that are commonly used to spread email viruses Windows Mail blocks certain types of files, like: .exe, .pif, and .scr files. When Windows Mail blocks an attachment, the Information bar displays a message notifying you and listing the attachment that was blocked.

To access blocked attachments close the message with the attachment. Then in the Tools drop down menu select Options. Click the Security tab and clear the Do not allow Attachments to be saved or opened that could potentially be a virus check box. Next reopen the message. Once you access the attachment it is better to repeat the process and block the attachments again.

Junk Mail Folder

Windows Mail's junk email filter is designed to catch obvious spam and move them to the Junk e-mail folder. helps manage your Inbox to keep it free of unwanted email.

Change the Junk Email Protection Level

In the Tools drop down menu click Junk e-mail Options and set the protection level you want:

Move a Message from the Junk Email Folder to the Inbox

Open the Junk email folder and select the message to move to the Inbox. In the toolbar point to Junk email and click Mark as Not Junk in the drop down menu. The message is moved to your Inbox.

Add Sender to the Blocked Senders List

Select a message from the sender to add to the Blocked Senders list. On the toolbar point to Junk email and then click Add Sender to Blocked Senders List. This blocks all future messages from that specific sender.

Add Sender to the Safe Senders List

Select a message from the sender to add to the Safe Senders list. On the toolbar point to Junk email, and then click Add Sender to Safe Senders List. This allows all future messages from that specific sender.

Correct File Associations

If files are opening in the wrong application find one of the files and right click it. Then in Windows Vista, select Open With and then Choose Default Program. From the list of programs select the program to use. Or Browse to add a program to the list. Click to check the Always use the selected program to open this kind of file box and then click OK. In Windows XP, after right clicking the file select Open With. Then find the program to use. or Browse to find another program. Again, check Always use the selected program to open this kind of file and click OK.

Remove Your Phone Number from Searches

Google

Search to find your listing in Google's PhoneBook. Then go to Google's online PhoneBook Name Removal form and enter the information as it appeared in the Google listing.

WhitePages.com

Find your listing on WhitePages.com. and at the bottom of your listing click the small link that for "Is this you? Remove your listing." Confirm the remove request.

Yahoo

Find your listing using Yahoo!'s People Search. Then use the online Remove Phone Listing form and enter your name as it appears in the listing.

Switchboard.com

Find your listing by searching Switchboard. Click the Remove this listing link beside the listing and provide your email address.

Office 2007

Format Painter

The Format Painter is an easy way to copy formatting you want to duplicate on other text. Select the text to copy the format from, click the Format Painter button and then select the text to format. To apply the same formatting to more than one item, select the text with the formatting, double-click Format Painter, and then select each word, phrase, or paragraph you want to apply formatting to. When finished, click the Format Painter again or press ESC. Format Painter is available in most Office programs.

Create a Theme from a Document

Themes are a valuable asset in Word and other Office files. A theme is a combination of theme colors, theme fonts, and theme effects. When you have generated a document with just the perfect formatting you may want to use it again. So save the formatting as a custom theme. With the document open on the Page Layout tab, in the Themes

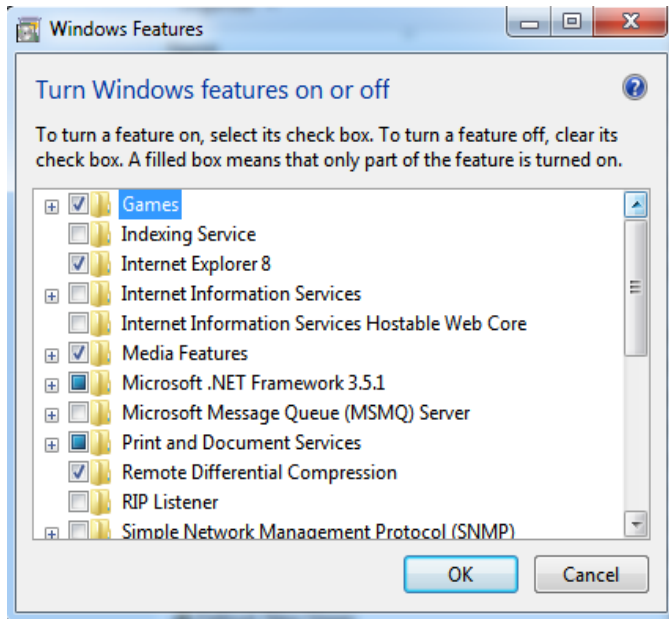
group, click Themes. At the bottom of the menu, click Save Current Theme. Provide a file name and click save.

Use a Theme from another Document

If you didn't create a theme from a document you can still use it as a theme for a new document. Open the document that you want to apply a different theme to and on the Page Layout tab, in the Themes group, click Themes. At the bottom of the menu, click Browse for Themes. In the Choose Theme or Themed Document dialog box, select the 2007 Office document that contains the theme to apply, and click Open.

You've got them. Why Not Use Them?

People configure their desktops in different ways for an all encompassing assortment of reasons. Most use the Windows defaults which are quite reasonable, but operate from a false assumption that “factory specifications” are enough. Windows has lots of useful features not included in the default settings which could have great benefits, but if one doesn't know the features are there, one can never enjoy these prospective benefits.



Let's start by opening the **Control Panel** and clicking on **Programs**. In the **Programs and Features** section click the **Turn Windows Features on or off**. A dialog box appears which will enable you to turn features on or off. (See illustration).

There's probably much more here than you want, so let's examine several features that you are more likely to use rather than the ones which require professional technical knowledge to be useful.

The Indexing Service got a bad reputation in Vista because it was annoyingly slow. There is no doubt that Vista was a resource hog so any service or utility that had additional requirements tended to bog down the system even further. Microsoft resolved the problem in Windows 7 by turning the Indexing Service off by default. That's too bad because the utility can actually be very helpful in locating files and other content through flexible

inquiries. Try it, you just may like it.

Internet Information Services (IIS) and Internet Information Services Hostable Web Core: You will not be held accountable if you don't know what these tools do or if you choose to ignore them. **IIS** is mostly regarded as a major component of a server while the **Hostable Web Core** performs fewer functions and needs fewer resources. If you write web based applications or wish to experiment hosting a web site on your desktop, these tools may be essential.

Microsoft Message Queue Server: This utility has been around for years and most application developers have come to ignore it because it's not new. If you send and receive messages on a regular basis with people who are in remote locations on the planet, and have “iffy” connections, you now have a tool to build a message queue, store a message within it, and send it when the connection to the recipient is up and running. You can also create a similar structure for receiving messages. Using this tool effectively requires basic programming skills.

Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP): Everyone who uses a computer on a regular basis should be concerned about unauthorized access to personal information or attempts to trick people into revealing information which should remain private. If you have a home network, wireless or not, SNMP gives you better control over devices on the network. You can configure hardware, troubleshoot more effectively, and in many cases even track down attempts to crack into your network. This tool requires a working knowledge of how a network operates.

Telnet Client: This is a great diagnostic tool if your email client is acting strangely and normal diagnostics can not resolve the problem. Turn it on when you need it, and turn it off when you're not using it as there are security issues with it.

These tools are not for everyone, especially those with little computing experience, but your level of knowledge shouldn't remain at the novice stage. Challenge yourself and you won't be like the guy who thinks he has twenty years of experience when in reality all he has is one year of experience twenty times. :

(Approx. 447 words)

WUBI?

What The Heck Is A WUBI?

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The Windows-based Ubuntu Installer (WUBI) is a program that allows you to install and remove Ubuntu-Linux from within Microsoft Windows (98, 2000, XP, Vista, or Windows 7). WUBI automatically creates a dual boot option that lets a Microsoft Windows user try Ubuntu without risking any data loss due to disk formatting or partitioning. Normally, installing Ubuntu or any version of Linux on a system that is also running Windows is intimidating and very risky. Total failure to boot Windows is a common result.

WUBI to the rescue: The WUBI installer is now included on every Ubuntu Live CD and easily installs Ubuntu INSIDE of windows (all versions), and in the same partition (drive letter) as Windows if you like. The install process is like any other program installed in Windows. Installing this way is soooooo easy. Also, when you want to remove Ubuntu, you just go to Add/Remove Programs and remove it like any other program running under Windows.

Dual-boot: After the installation, a new (dual) boot option screen appears right after power up, allowing you to select whether you want to run either Windows standalone or Ubuntu standalone.

Wow, what a great way to play with Linux/Ubuntu without the hassle of partitioning the hard drive and dealing with those messy dual-boot managers like GRUB or GAG. Yuck (Yes, those are real acronyms. Not the Yuck. It just means yuck).

To start the process, you need an Ubuntu Live (Install) CD that you or a friend has downloaded and burned. You can also go to the Ubuntu website and have them mail you a free CD (10 weeks).

To install Ubuntu using WUBI, just insert the "Ubuntu Install CD" while Windows is running. Do not boot the CD. The CD should start. If not, go to My Computer, open the CD and click on wubi.exe. When you see the opening window, simply select "Install Inside Windows". After that, you answer a few questions about what drive letter, and how much drive space you want to allow for Ubuntu.

That's it!

I have tried this under XP and Windows 7 and it is flawless.

NOTES:

- Hibernation is not supported when installing Ubuntu via WUBI (for either Windows or Ubuntu).
- Follow these links for detailed WUBI operating instructions:
[http://wiki.ubuntu.com/ WubiGuide](http://wiki.ubuntu.com/WubiGuide) and here:
<http://help.ubuntu.com/community/Wubi>
- Ubuntu 32 bit can run under Windows 32 bit or Windows 64 bit.