

# The NCTCUG Journal

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## E-Mail: Be Less Annoying Take 2: Mail Lists.

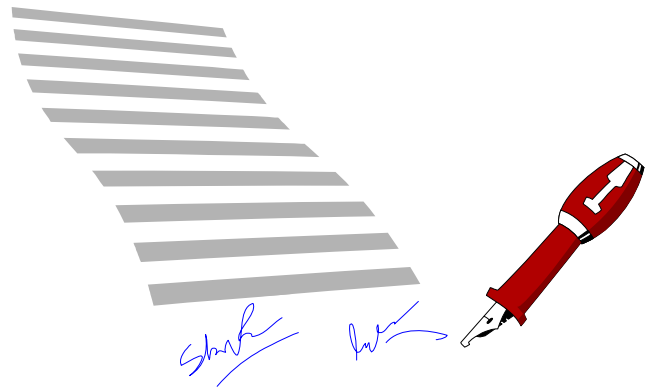
By Steve Bass, PC World  
Author, PC Annoyances

I really struck a nerve with readers of my newsletter when I talking about annoying e-mails. My inbox was flooded with a bucket of e-mail (most of it not very annoying). So this week I figured I'd follow up with advice on good mail list etiquette. But before I do, here are some e-mail gaffes that drive readers crazy.

“Stop sending chain e-mails to me—no matter what the cause (little Timmy needs your old Christmas cards to live, canola oil is poison, tell someone you love them, whatever...). While I find them annoying in general, they are even worse when they are the only time you contact me. I'd rather be dropped from your little list. Think for a minute: Do I ever send you such drivel, or respond to it?”—Chuck

“Always use the subject line. I automatically delete any e-mail without a subject line.”—Linda

“Check spellings. Don't mix subjects in one e-mail.”—Arvind



“Phone home. For conversations that require significant two-way dialog and do not require documenting, use a phone or IM. Do not send an e-mail asking me to lunch in 30 minutes.”—Jack

“Stop using those fancy script fonts! They are near impossible to read. And please, no more purple, orange, green font colors. It's an e-mail, not a work of art!”—Mark

Now, on to some mail list etiquette. If you're new to mail lists, or even if you're not, you can learn how to make your messages easier to read, more useful, and definitely less annoying to others.

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## Getting Ready For Windows Vista

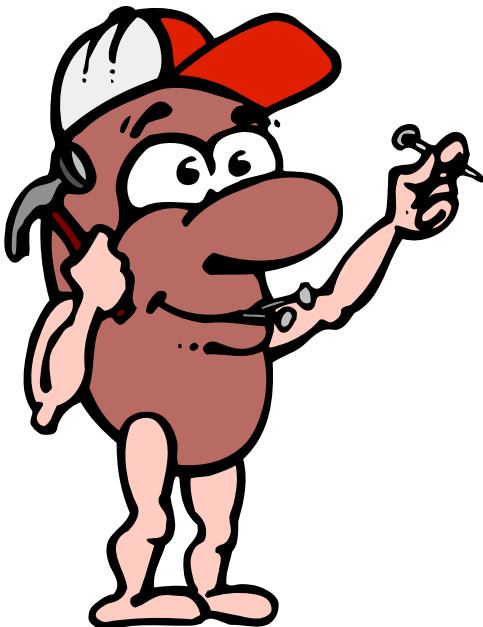
By Gene Barlow, [gene@ugr.com](mailto:gene@ugr.com), User Group Relations, <http://www.ugr.com>

The next few months promise to be an exciting time for PC users as Microsoft rolls out their new Windows Vista operating system. While some business systems may be released late this year, most of the action will take place shortly after the beginning of the new year. Now is the time to start planning how you are going to take advantage of this new technology.

This is the first new version of Windows in over five years and is a major change in how PC users will interact with their computers. Lots of new functions have been added to Vista to make it the most exciting new Windows since Windows 95 was first introduced. You will want to be a part of this major step forward in technology.

Some of the new features added to Windows Vista include:

- ☆ A complete redesign of the graphical user interface that you see and interact with. Windows Vista has a fresh new look and is a lot easier to use.
- ☆ Finding things on your Vista computer is going to be much easier. Files can be stored in one location, but retrieved in many different ways.



- ☆ New multimedia tools will now be part of Vista. This will help you to better work with your images, music, and videos files.
- ☆ Communications between computer systems has also been greatly enhanced. Connecting with other computers can now be done quickly and easily.
- ☆ System security has also been enhanced. Vista will provide you with more security features than older Windows systems did.

These are just a few of the hundreds of new features you will find in Vista. To read about more of them download the *Windows Vista Product Guide* found on the Microsoft's web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/preview/>.

Interested and excited about Windows Vista? You should be. This is a very important change in how we use our computers. So, what do you need to do to get your computer ready for Windows Vista?

Microsoft suggests two ways to move to Windows Vista. They are as follows:

- ☆ Do a Clean Install of Vista on top of your old WinXP operating system. This replaces your WinXP system with a new Windows Vista system. You will have to save all of your data files and settings from your old system before installing Vista and then put them back on your hard drive after Vista is installed. You will also need to reinstall all of your application programs from their original CDs. This is a lot of work, but it should give you a cleaner Vista system. Unfortunately, in the process you will destroy your old WinXP system. I consider this approach too risky for my use.
- ☆ Do an in-place upgrade of your old WinXP operating system with Windows Vista. This will install Windows Vista on top of your old operating system, but will keep all of your application programs and data files from your

old system in the Windows Vista replacement. This is an easier way to go, but if things don't work, you have just destroyed your old working WinXP system in the process. Again, too risky for my liking.

So, how can you get to Windows Vista and still have the protection of your working WinXP system while you are getting use to Windows Vista? The secret is that you setup your computer's hard drive to run multiple operating systems. That will give you the ability to run both your current WinXP operating system and the new Windows Vista operating system on the same computer. This is easy to do with the right software tools.

First, you need to set up a logical Data partition on your main hard drive to hold all of the data files. Then you can access those data files from either of the two operating systems you are using. To do this, you need a partitioning utility like *Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0*. More about this excellent utility later.

Once you have moved all of your data files from your WinXP partition to this new Data partition you will be ready to install Vista. You can do this in the following ways:

☆ Multiple Operating Systems with a Clean Install of Windows Vista. Using the top rated partitioning utility, *Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0*, you set up a second primary partition on your main computer. Then you install a Clean version of Windows Vista in this second primary partition on your main hard drive. When you are done, you can switch back and forth between your WinXP operating system and your new Windows Vista operating system using the *OS Selector* utility that comes with *Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0*. This lets you keep your working WinXP system while you are building your new Windows Vista system. You will need to install any application programs in the Windows Vista partition that you want to run under Vista. This will give you the cleanest installation of Vista possible.

☆ Multiple Operating Systems with an Upgrade Install of Windows Vista. Also using the partitioning utility, *Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0*, you set up an empty space on your main computer where your Vista primary partition will reside. Then you copy your WinXP operating system partition into this empty space on your hard drive. This gives you two primary partitions, each with WinXP installed in it and running. Next, you do a Windows Vista upgrade install into the partition with the copy of WinXP. This will replace WinXP in that one partition with Windows Vista, but still keep your application programs and settings. You can switch back and forth between the two operating systems using the *OS Selector* utility that comes with *Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0*. This is the easiest way to get to Windows Vista from WinXP.

By using multiple operating systems on your computer to run both WinXP and Windows Vista, you do not risk having to burn your WinXP bridges before you are comfortable with Windows Vista. This gives you the time to test out your application programs and get everything working on your new Windows Vista system before you commit to using it exclusively. Once you are satisfied that Windows Vista works perfectly for you, then you can discard the old WinXP system and only use Windows Vista. It may be several months before you finally get rid of WinXP. You do not need to get rid of it the day you first install Windows Vista like the two Microsoft options suggest.

To help you move to Window Vista, we are putting several things in place. First, you will need a copy of the excellent partitioning utility, *Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0*. This product normally sells for \$50, but we offer it to user group members and their friends for a discounted price of \$29 in our Fall Special bundle. You will also get a copy of our tutorial, *Getting Ready for Windows Vista* in the Fall Special bundle. Both of these for only \$29 is an outstanding bargain and

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one that you won't want to miss. Order yours today from our web site at [www.usergroupstore.com](http://www.usergroupstore.com). Look for the Fall Special and use the order code of UGFAL06 to complete your order.

To help you understand and use *Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0* to get ready for Windows Vista, we have just completed a new tutorial titled, *Getting Ready for Windows Vista*. You can view it on our web site at [www.ugr.com/tutorials.html](http://www.ugr.com/tutorials.html). This will help you to better understand the steps needed to set up multiple operating systems on your computer. Those ordering our Fall Special on a CD will receive the tutorial CD with their order. Finally, we are working on a detailed step-by-step technical paper titled, *Using Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0 to Install Windows Vista*. This paper should be available around the end of October on our web site. We want your move to Windows Vista to be successful, so we are offering you all of these tutorials and papers to help you get there as planned.

Be one of the first to use the exciting new Windows Vista operating system on your computer and share this information with your friends. We will help you get to that point safely and easily with our excellent products, tutorials, and prices. If you have any questions about this article or *Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0*, please send them to [gene@ugr.com](mailto:gene@ugr.com). I look forward to helping you if I can.

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## Tweaking Windows' Taskbar

By Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor;  
Columnist, AARP Computer & Technology  
Website, [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

It's easy to use a key part of Windows' screen real estate, the taskbar, without really noticing it. Like a car's dashboard, taskbar components summarize what's happening on your computer and access running software. But unlike your car's dashboard, the taskbar can be customized for individual needs and preferences.

### Fun with Windows' Taskbar

I've read reports that most people can't accurately draw their car's dashboard, no matter how many hours or years they've stared at it. Similarly, many of us look at and use a key part of Windows' screen real estate—the taskbar—without paying much attention to it.

Like a car's dashboard, taskbar components—Start button at one end, notification area icons at the other, and application buttons in between—summarize what's happening on your PC and give quick access to running software. But the taskbar is more interesting than a car dashboard: you can customize it for your individual needs and preferences.

This article describes Windows XP's taskbar; other Windows versions have mostly similar facilities. People sometimes worry when their taskbar disappears or suddenly looks odd—or moves to an unfamiliar place on the screen. We'll see how such glitches are easily fixed.

Right-clicking a blank taskbar area displays Windows' familiar context menu, showing available options. Clicking Toolbars lets you display or hide built-in toolbars (groups of icons representing programs, folders, or files) or create your own. My favorite toolbars are Desktop (a handy pop-up list which duplicates desktop icons) and Quick Launch (which holds the few key icons I always want immediately available). Other standard toolbars are Address and Links.

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Cascade and Tile options specify arrangement of open application windows: fanned like playing cards or arranged in a grid.

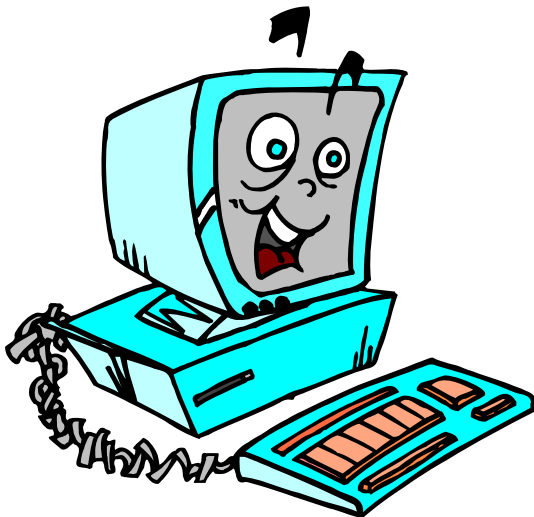
A key option—Lock the Taskbar—controls whether you can change the taskbar. When the taskbar is unlocked, you can change its size by dragging its edge away from or towards the screen's edge. You can move individual toolbars by grabbing their handles (perforated line near each one) and move the taskbar by grabbing a blank area.

Clicking Properties brings up a detailed options dialog box. It's safe to experiment but only change one thing at a time until you learn your way through all the choices.

The Taskbar tab customizes the taskbar itself and its notification area. You can auto-hide the taskbar—handy on small monitors to reclaim space for application windows. When it hides, moving the mouse near it makes it visible. You can always keep the taskbar on top of other applications, or allow it to be covered. If it's hidden, pressing ctrl-esc displays it.

Similar task bar buttons—for example, representing multiple Word documents—can be grouped to save taskbar space, or spread out. If they're grouped, left-clicking the group displays all open files, and right-clicking lets you manipulate the files simultaneously.

You can add and delete Quick Launch toolbar icons by dragging them on or off the toolbar. I trimmed mine to two icons: Show Desktop and Windows Explorer. From a Windows keyboard, these are available by pressing Win-D and Win-E, respectively.



The notification area (called the “tray” in earlier Windows versions) shows icons for small applications or utilities that are running, plus your clock. Mousing over an icon pops up its name. You can control which icons are displayed and whether inactive icons (representing programs you haven't used for a while) are hidden. Each program running consumes PC resources so it's worth monitoring these icons and pruning any which aren't necessary. Right-click an icon to display options. Closing some applications prevents them from automatically starting at system boot, while others offer an explicit option.

Continuing our tour through taskbar properties, the Start Menu tab lets you specify Start Menu appearance and operation. You can pick large or small icons and determine how many shortcuts are saved in it for recently used programs. Key programs can be “pinned” to the Start menu by right-clicking a desktop icon or dragging an icon to the Start button and placing it in the permanent top area. The Advanced tab determines Start menu behavior and lets you select modern or “classic” Start menu format.

Finally, when the Taskbar is unlocked, three extra toolbar right-click options are available: View, Show text, and Show title, for fine tuning your PC's “dashboard”.

While Windows operates just fine as it's installed, tweaking taskbar settings and other options can make it faster and more pleasant to use. And since there are usually multiple ways to accomplish tasks in Windows, it's worth exploring—for example, right-clicking to explore context menus and clicking various options/customize/advanced buttons to see what's available. Don't be afraid to tinker, but remember what you change so you can undo it!

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# Back To The Future With System Restore

By Marjorie Tucker, Member of the Mountain Computer Users Group, Young Harris, GA  
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Did you know that your computer has the ability to go back in time — just like the movie, *Back to the Future*? Well, it does, using a Windows XP program named System Restore. This built-in Windows program periodically makes an image of your hard drive, much like a backup copy. Then, when you have one of those annoying problems, like losing all of your desktop icons, you can restore that image to get your computer back in good working order.

You can find System Restore under Start - All Programs - Accessories - System Tools - System Restore. The screen that initially comes up gives you some basic information about this program. It will restore your settings to an earlier point in time, but leave your data completely intact. And, there is no fear of using it since the program is completely reversible.

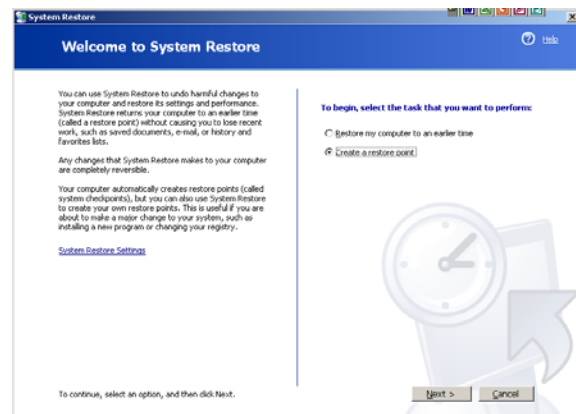


To begin, you merely click the Next button on the right side of the screen. The next page shows a calendar, open to the current month, with bold numbers indicating the dates when an image was created on your computer. You can also use the arrows at the top of the calendar to go farther back in time, if necessary. You merely choose one of these dates and click again on Next.

The following screen reviews your choice and advises you to close all open programs since System Restore will be restarting your computer. Verify that you want to take this step and then click on the Next button again to start the process.

Be patient because it will take several minutes to perform this action; but eventually your computer will restart itself and it will be back to the restoration time point. If this didn't solve your problem you can run the program again and go even further back in time.

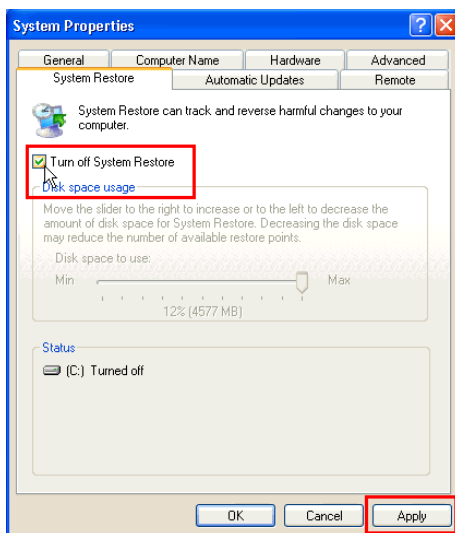
## Create Your Own Restore Point



There are times when it would be very nice to know that you have a backup all ready to use - such as just before you start to install that monstrous new program that may destroy your entire computer setup. Well, System Restore will let you create an additional restore point anytime it would be convenient. To do this, merely click on the second choice of the initial System Restore screen, Create a Restore Point. The program will make an instant backup that you can use when that new program fails.

## There Are Some Cautions

System Restore is very useful tool and you will probably need to use it before long. However, this handy feature can cause problems when your computer catches a virus or gains an unwanted trojan. Every time your computer creates a new restore backup point, it is also backing up that virus or trojan. That means that although you get rid of the problem, it has the ability to sneak back into your computer from that backup. For this reason Symantec and other antivirus software companies suggest that you turn off the System Restore feature before you de-virus your computer.



To turn off System Restore click the Start button, right-click My Computer and left-click Properties. Click the System Restore tab and then check the box labelled “Turn off system restore.” You will be asked if you are certain you want to turn it off; click on OK. System Restore is now turned off. You are now free to get rid of any viruses or trojans without fear that they will immediately return. Just remember to turn System Restore on when you have finished.

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## Are You “Compuliterate?”

By **Berry F. Phillips**, member of the **Computer Club of Oklahoma City** and a regular writer for the **CCOKC** website and the **eMonitor** [bfpdata\(at\)1access.net](mailto:bfpdata@taccess.net) <http://www.ccokc.org>

### “Compuliteracy” Test (unknown author)

1. Who invented the computer? Mr. Chips, E.T., Marquis de Sade.
2. What are microchips? What a herd of micros leave on the prairie, What you eat with a micro-dip, The reason you had to take all those computer literacy courses.
3. What is a floppy disk? A painful lower-back condition, An album that didn't sell, A great Frisbee.
4. What is the first thing you associate with computers? Bill Cosby commercials, Eyestrain & headaches, Annoying beeps, Three tons of print-out where once there was a 3-page report, All of the above.
5. 5. What is FORTRAN? Between 3 and 5 tran, How to get computers excited before interface, Ridiculous.
6. What is Pascal? A leafy vegetable, A foot fungus, A city in southern France, None of the above.
7. When you need consulting help in deciding what to do with your computer, which organization do you think of? IBM, FBI, PLO?
8. What is the most important computer peripheral? Bill Gates, Someone to operate the computer for you, Aspirin.

Some years ago, I was staring at a demo game computer with that blank stare of a computer illiterate in a large computer store. I felt a tug on my sleeve and there was a small lad who asked me rather impatiently, “Why don't you do something?” I confessed with great difficulty being an adult that I did not

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know what to do. This mini computer user said, "I will show you because I have this game at home." He began killing monsters right and left as I slunk out of the store in humiliation. I vowed from that day forward I would become computer literate because no eight year old was going to be more computer literate than I was!

I suspect you have some hands on computer experience since you are reading my column. Computer literacy is today a necessity when entering the job market. I remember when Time Magazine awarded the computer, their coveted Man of the Year which dramatically illustrated the incredible impact the personal computer has had on our contemporary society. Computer literacy does not mean you need to know everything about a computer but you should master the basics and understand how a computer works. I remember thinking that just because a person used a computer in a business that they must be computer literate. I discovered that many computer users only knew how to do limited applications necessary for them to do their specific work. Further, I noticed that many computer users due to lack of computer literacy were very limited in their use of their computers. Limited computer literacy usually translates into limited use of the computer, never experiencing the full potential of the computer and maximizing their return on their computer investment.

What alternatives are available to accelerate one's level of computer literacy? Basic computer courses are offered by most continuing education programs. They are usually reasonably priced and conveniently scheduled. They can be found in your local school district, or community college on evenings and weekends. There are career retraining programs that often offer computer courses through your local Labor Department Office. There are also online courses and tutorials available and the public libraries have computers available to their patrons with Internet access.

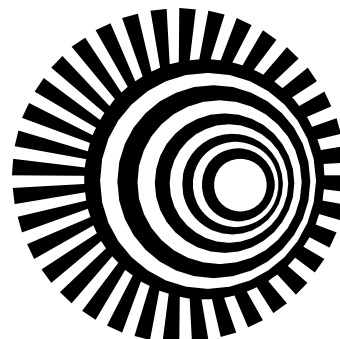
I have found that computer clubs are an excellent choice for developing computer literacy since they are economical, and less theoretical and are more focused on how to operate the computer using various applications. Computer users helping other computer users move to the next level of computer literacy is an incredible learning and motivating experience. All of

those who obtain computer literacy were once computer illiterates. As they were helped to reach computer literacy, they enjoy helping others as they were helped. You are never alone in your journey to reach computer literacy in a computer club; there is always another member to ask a question or to get hands on help. Many computer clubs have computer labs as does the Computer Club of Oklahoma City, [www.ccokc.org](http://www.ccokc.org) (405-843-4300) which is also affiliated with the national Senior Net Users Group and the Association of PC Users Groups. If you are not in the Oklahoma City area, please contact the Association of PC Users Groups, [www.apcug.org](http://www.apcug.org) (800-558-6867) to check on an affiliated computer club in your area .

The sole objective of computer clubs is to help each other to reach computer literacy. We often hear from our members who have achieved computer literacy how when they started they wondered how they would ever use a computer and now wonder how they will ever get along without a computer! The transition from computer illiteracy to literacy is truly amazing. Our mission is to help each other reach computer literacy with a variety of proven classes that will get you up too speed as soon as possible. The Computer Club of Oklahoma City believes the only unintelligent question is the unasked question! Obtaining computer literacy is not a luxury but an absolute necessity in our rapidly evolving technological society.

I hope that I remain "compuliterate" because those eight year olds are getting more and more "compuliterate" especially the older I get!

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## When Replying to Messages

1. Don't hit Reply All for every message. Avoid responses the entire list won't find useful. For instance, don't reply to the entire list with "thanks," "good idea," or "I'll try it!" Instead, reply directly to the person who just helped you.

Unfortunately, on many lists it's easy to inadvertently reply to everyone instead of an individual. Take a sec and check the return address before hitting Send. The sender's e-mail address is usually near the top of the message.

Another tip: Insert OFFLIST at the start of your subject line when replying to an individual. That way the recipient will know you're not replying to the entire list.

2. Remove the extra stuff. When replying, it takes seconds to snip extraneous junk and leave only essential portions of the previous message. There's rarely a need to repeat the entire thread, and doing so often discourages people from reading your message.

No matter what you do, get rid of the stuff that's automatically inserted at the bottom of every message—the "how to unsubscribe" junk—that clutters up every message.

3. Keep the subject line short. If you're viewing messages in digest form, the subject is something lengthy, like, "[Computing] Digest 07-13-06, 16 messages." When you reply to a message, it's essential (mandatory, really) that you change the subject to the message topic. Then remove everything from the digest message except the topic and your response.

4. Restrain yourself. It's not necessary to weigh in on every topic, especially on very busy lists. Consider limiting yourself to one or two messages a day.

## When Starting A New Thread

1. Brevity is the soul of wit. Just as with e-mail, consider tackling just one topic or issue per message, and keep your messages short. Long messages (more than, say, three or four paragraphs) are difficult to read; long paragraphs are equally difficult to plow through.

2. Use an informative signature line. Keep your signature line short, say, two or three lines. Usually your name is adequate, though some lists (such as one I'm on about camper vans) want a city and state. The point is to avoid sticking in anything nonessential.

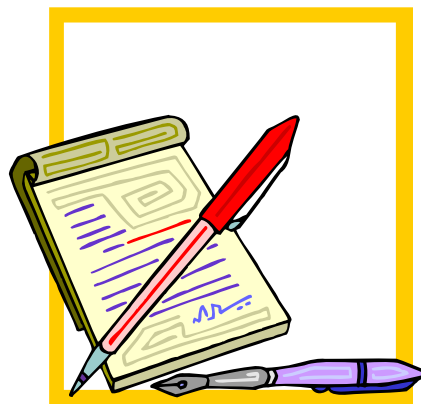
3. Stay on topic. If it's a computing list, send messages about computing; ditto for a cooking list, or any other special-interest group. Most importantly, avoid political messages and jokes.

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Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World, a 23 year veteran of PIBMUG, and a founding member of APCUG. He's also the author of *PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things about Your Personal Computer*, O'Reilly Press. It's available on Amazon at dirt cheap prices. <http://snurl.com/annoyances>

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## Tour The World With World Wind

By Rob Rice, a member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and a computer specialist in Anchorage, Alaska <http://www.ccokc.org/> [articles\(at\)isp.com](mailto:articles(at)isp.com)

Lots of folks are familiar with Google Earth, the free downloadable virtual globe program. Yet I am finding that many have never heard of NASA'S World Wind. World Wind is developed at the NASA Ames Research Center and is an open-source competitor to Google Earth. While it has been around for several years, it is a fascinating piece of software that can keep you glued to your monitor for hours on end.



Like Google Earth, this free program maps the earth by superimposing images obtained from satellite imagery and United States Geological Survey aerial photography over a 3D globe. Once the 60 megabyte program has been downloaded and installed, you are treated to a true-color image of the entire Earth from space upon opening the program. The globe can be manipulated with your mouse. Use the mouse wheel to zoom from satellite altitude down to any place on earth. Hold the left button and move the mouse to rotate the globe and the right button to tilt it.



The Landsat satellite imagery and Shuttle Radar Topography Mission data allows one to experience Earth terrain in 3D, just as if you were flying low over the landscape. Visit any place in the world.

But as they say on TV, "Wait! There's more!" World Wind also comes with virtual globes of the Moon, Venus, Jupiter, Mars and the Sloan Digital Sky Server, which allows you to explore outer space.

A variety of views are available. Below is a summary from the World Wind website:

### Blue Marble

World Wind has a full copy of the Blue Marble, a spectacular true-color image of the entire Earth as seen on NASA's Earth Observatory: the Blue Marble.

Put together from data of a variety of satellites such as MODIS and Terra, the Blue Marble can be seen in all its glory at 1 km per pixel resolution.



Using World Wind, you can continue to zoom past Blue Marble and reveal the extremely detailed seamless mosaic of Landsat 7 data.

Landsat 7 is a collection of images from 1999-2003 at an impressive 15 m per pixel resolution. It includes other color bands such as the infrared spectrum. Users will be able browse these different sets as they become available. Any changes and updates are automatically inherited by World Wind.

Landsat 7's resolution makes it possible to see your own city, neighborhood, or landmarks in your vicinity. Seeing the whole globe like this puts the world in context with scientifically accurate data.

The complete Landsat 7 data set is too large to fit on a single machine so World Wind only downloads what you see and stores a compressed copy on your computer for later viewing.



Combining Landsat 7 imagery with Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) Data, World Wind can display a dramatic view of the Earth at eye level. Users will literally be able to fly across the world in any direction.

In addition, World Wind can exaggerate these views so a user can easily pick out the details.

## NASA SVS

Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) has produced a set of visually intense animations that demonstrate a variety of subjects such as hurricane dynamics and seasonal changes across the globe.

World Wind can take these animations and play them directly on the world. Anyone can immediately grasp where the event is taking place as World Wind rotates automatically into view.

## MODIS

Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer or MODIS produces a set of time relevant data that's updated every day. MODIS catalogs fires, floods, dust, smoke, storms and even volcanic activity.

World Wind produces an easily customized view of this information and marks them directly on the globe. When one of these color coded markers are clicked, it downloads the full image and displays them.



MODIS images can download publication quality material at a resolution of 250 m per pixel. A new fresh set of images can be downloaded every day.

World Wind also has a "tour mode" to automatically skim through any number of samples.

World Wind is capable of browsing through and displaying GLOBE data based on any time the user wants. For example, a user can download today's (or any previous day's) temperature across the world.

You can view rainfall, barometric pressure, cloud cover, or even the student GLOBE samples themselves. Each sample comes with a temperature scale

## Country & (USA) State Borders

World Wind has a complete set of borders that traces every country and state. As you zoom into the world, the boundaries become more precise

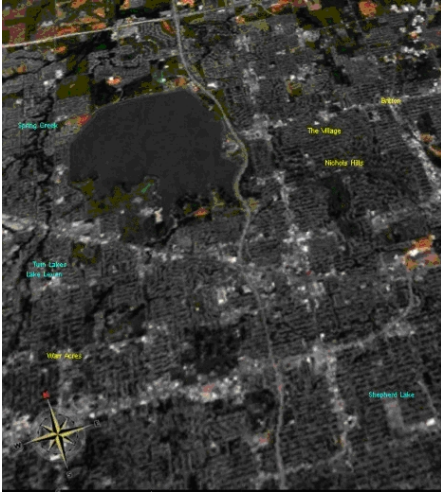
You can observe where mountain ridges and rivers have formed the political boundaries of today.

## Place Names

World Wind has a full catalog of countries, capitals, counties, cities, towns, and even historical references. The names update dynamically, by increasing in number as the user zooms in. This prevents too many names from cluttering up the screen.

It's likely that you'll find your own town no matter how big or small it is in World Wind.

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## Visual Tools

World Wind comes with a variety of visual guides that help the user's experience such as latitude and longitude lines, as well as extremely precise coordinate data.

These helpers can be toggled on or off any time and are viewable with any of World Wind's other features turned on.

## Landmark Set

World Wind has the capability to display actual 3d models of landmarks on the Earth. This helps to see the world in context to places a user may have been to. Those landmarks that do not have 3D models for it yet have place markers similar to how MODIS displays places of interest.



World Wind is an incredible and highly addictive program that anyone with a high speed Internet connection should not be without. Give NASA'S World Wind a try and you won't be sorry you did!

### Minimum system requirements:

Windows 2000, XP, or 2003

3D graphics card

Internet connection

Sorry, no support for Linux or Macintosh yet

Microsoft .NET 1.1

Microsoft DirectX 9.0c

With the minimum configuration, performance and functionality may be less than expected.

700 MHz or higher CPU

128 MB RAM

1 GB disk space (World Wind's cache size is 2 GB by default; you must reduce the size of your cache)

### Recommended configuration

1.4 GHz or higher CPU

256 MB of RAM

DSL/cable connection or faster

3 GB of disk space

### World Wind Home Page:

<http://worldwind.arc.nasa.gov/index.html>

### World Wind Wiki, "A knowledge base about NASA's World Wind that anyone can edit".

[http://www.worldwindcentral.com/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.worldwindcentral.com/wiki/Main_Page)

### World Wind Forums:

<http://forum.worldwindcentral.com/>

### Video Card Compatibility List:

[http://www.worldwindcentral.com/wiki/Video\\_Card\\_Compatibility](http://www.worldwindcentral.com/wiki/Video_Card_Compatibility)

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## Should You Upgrade To Vista?

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida  
<http://www.spcug.org> bwsail at yahoo dot com

As regular readers of this column know, I have been using the beta version(s) of Vista and writing about my experience. I'll grant you that I haven't covered every aspect of the Vista experience. However, it is difficult to touch on everything in an operating system as massive as this. The best I can do is pass on comments on the parts I use frequently. As to the answer to the upgrade question – it's "maybe". I'll give you some of the pros and cons related to my experience.

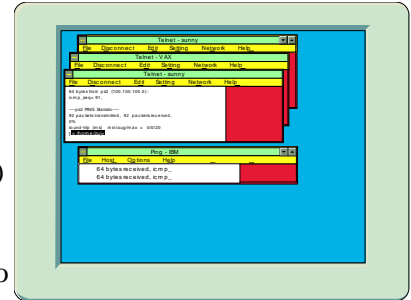
In deciding whether or not to upgrade you need to determine if your hardware is adequate to run Vista. The system I am using has 768 MB of RDRAM, a 1.2 GHz Intel processor, and an NVIDIA GeForce 2 MMX video card (a correction from previous articles) and an 80 GB hard drive. Frankly, I don't think you would want anything less. A faster processor combined with 1 GB of RAM would be the minimum in most situations. You will also need a DVD drive, as Vista will be sold on DVDs only. From what I have learned it appears that Microsoft will produce only one DVD, but it will contain all the consumer versions of Vista. When you pay for the Vista Basic version and start the installation, the product key that you have to enter tells the setup program which version to install. Then if you decide you need to upgrade to a version with more bells and whistles, you get a new product key that unlocks and installs the upgrade version you paid for. I've already seen some comments on the web that the hackers will be paying for Vista Basic and then will hack the DVD to install the Ultimate version. Let's hope not!

So if you have sufficient hardware then you can go to the next step. What is there about Vista that's better than XP? (Note that if you are still running Win98 or WinMe, plan on upgrading. Both Vista and XP are vastly superior to either of these older, non-supported

operating systems.) One thing I found that I really like is Vista's ability to go to the Internet to

find device drivers for hardware. It did this very successfully for my sound system. I also installed an external hard drive that usually requires me to dig out the manufacturer's disk to get the necessary drivers. XP frequently forgot the driver and would have to reinstall it whenever I plugged the drive into the USB port. When I plugged the drive into a USB port on my Vista computer, there wasn't even the usual found new hardware notice. So I went looking and in "Computer" I found the hard drive identified and was able to access the file on it. So I just went ahead and did a complete backup. Vista's backup software found the drive and did the complete backup in the background while I continued working. This process did not work with my Epson scanner. Vista did some searching and then said I needed to visit the manufacturer's web site to see if software was available. So you can see that this Internet process doesn't work with all hardware.

Another thing I like in Vista is the added security. I don't like that the firewall is only a one-way blocker, but the scheduled daily parasite check is valuable when you have a cable or DSL connection to the Internet. I don't find the User Account Control (UAC) system to be intrusive as some others have reported. Even when I am working in the Administrator account it is not a problem. I think having to enter a password to carry out operations that affect the system/registry is a good idea. It is one more barrier for any malware to overcome. In addition, when I am working in User mode and want to install a new application, I don't have to remember to right-click the install file and select "Run As". Instead, when I double-click the file I get a permissions window with the Administrator name and a box to enter the password. Much easier and much quicker way to get on with the installation.




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Dr. Lewis is a former university & medical school professor. He has been working with personal computers for more than thirty years. He can be reached via e-mail.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

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I also like the change that has been made in the Start/All programs menu. It keeps you from having to search through multiple columns of programs to find the one you want. Scrolling through a single column list is something I find easier to do. For new computer users, the use of an icon in place of a "Start" button may not be intuitive. However, placing your cursor on the icon does cause the word "Start" to pop up just above the icon. One of the interesting little facets is the speed with which informative small windows pop up when you place your cursor on an icon. There is really no apparent delay, which is quite helpful.

Another change I like is that there is a search box in every directory window. You don't have to go back to the Start menu to initiate a search. Also, your searches can easily be saved. You have the options in each window to select files to burn to a CD/DVD, e-mail, or print. These selections are made using a menu across the top of the window.

When it comes to CD/DVD burning there is one aspect I don't like. That is that the default mode calls for formatting the CD or DVD so that it functions like a removable drive. Microsoft refers to this as the "Live File System". The problem with this is that the CD/DVD may not be readable in other computers. Their warning implies that the "Live File System" can be read in computers using the Windows XP operating system. However, I found this

to be inaccurate, at least as far as the beta versions were concerned. It may be different in the final release version.

You can change the formatting method to "Mastered". This is the usual way you burn a CD/DVD by copying all the files for that disk at one time. CD/DVDs formatted for the "Live File System" can have files added by "dragging and dropping". You can also add and erase files. However, on a non-rewriteable disk the file is still there even though it is not accessible. Frankly, there are other burner software programs that I prefer. The third party programs also work much faster than the Vista application.

In Windows XP when you have a file folder open you can move or copy a file that has been selected. When you click on the move or copy icon on the right side of the window you get a browse window which allows you to select a destination either on your local computer or a computer on your network. Vista does not have this function. To move a file or files, you must first select them to be copied. Then you have to go to the destination window and select paste from the right-click menu with your mouse. Then it's back to the original window to delete the files you have copied to the new location. If that sounds like a round-about procedure, well it is. The XP procedure is cleaner, faster and easier.

Networking is another area where there have been some improvements made. However, if you have a network with both XP and Vista computers, there are still some bugs that have to be worked around. The Windows Help files have eliminated the references related to networking with XP computers. There are no references to the fact the new Internet protocol, IPv6, needs to be installed on XP computers for them to be networked with Vista computers. I couldn't even find the web page reference in the Help file that give me the details on installing IPv6 on XP computers.



## Washington Area Computer User Group (WAC) Meetings

WACUG Meetings will be held on March 17 and April 21, 2007 from 12:30 to 3:30 pm . at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA

You do not need to be a member to attend. For more information on WAC meetings and events, call the WAC AnswerLine (voice) at (703) 370-7649. Also see WAC's Web Site at

<http://www.wacug.org/>



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**For more information see:  
<http://www.nctcug.org/waugp.html>**

Again, this may be changed in the final version or the current build I'm using may not need to have IPv6 installed on the XP computers. But that is something I haven't be able to determine.

The biggest drawback I see to Vista is the pricing. The \$99.95 upgrade for the Home version is the same as with XP Home. Except, this lowest cost upgrade gives you only Vista Home Basic. This version has fewer capabilities than does XP Home. The version of Vista that comes closest to matching XP Home is Vista Home Premium and it carries a premium price; \$150.00 to upgrade. Vista Home Basic lacks the Windows Media Center, DVD video software, and wireless networking provisioning. This latter capability, if available, would provide automatic configuration of laptops in WiFi hotspots. Vista Home Basic does not allow for scheduled backups and does not include backup to a network device. Neither Basic nor Premium allow for image-based backups. They also do not support motherboards with two processor sockets. How this will play out with the Intel Core 2 Duo processors, I

really don't know. Vista Home Basic also does not have the new Aero graphic interface. That is found only in the Home Premium, Business and Ultimate versions. Unfortunately I can't tell you about the Aero interface as my computer doesn't support it.

Vista Business is the next higher priced version. It is \$199.99 for the upgrade. Although it has the image-based backup capability and wireless networking provisioning, it lacks Media Center capability and as well as the Movie Maker and Video production capabilities. You would have to obtain third party software for these functions if you have a need for them.

So if your only interest in using a computer is for e-mail, web surfing, word processing, then you might be satisfied with Vista Basic. However, you would be just as well off to stick with XP Home for the time being. If you are running a small business from your home you would probably be quite satisfied with Vista Home Premium. So who would need Vista Business or Ultimate? The business version might be useful in a small busi-

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## NCTCUG Information

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Club Information call: 301-577-7899

Web Site: [www.nctcug.org](http://www.nctcug.org)

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Articles, helpful hints, and other items of interest to readers of the NCTCUG Journal are always welcome and will be published as soon as possible after submission. Priority is given to members' contributions. Items may be submitted via modem to the BBS or on diskette. Submissions to the BBS should be uploaded to the Newsletter Conference and a message left for the Editor. Files should be straight ASCII, unformatted, with C/R only at end of paragraphs; no indents for paragraphs should be used. Preferred format for diskettes is MS-DOS 3 1/2 720k or 1.44Mb. Diskettes in other formats may be submitted but there will be a considerable delay in processing. If absolutely necessary, items may be submitted in hardcopy only but these will also meet with delay.

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Please send your change of address to the club PO box as soon as possible to avoid missing issues.

*Thank You!*

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ness with a wired or wireless LAN or where employees require laptops with wireless functions. It also has integrated Fax & Scan software. However, if you needed the Movie Maker, Media Center, or video production capability, then you would have to move up to Ultimate. That has an upgrade price of \$259.00.

If you are concerned about the security of Windows XP and the frequent security patches Microsoft has to release, then you can consider that Vista is more secure. That doesn't mean it will never need security patching. Quite the contrary. Any OS, especially one as complex as Vista will have hackers attempting to find its weak points and that will result in the need for security patches.

My concluding thoughts on this are that you will eventually have to move to Vista, unless you want to try an alternate OS such as a Linux version or a Macintosh OS. There are emulator programs for both Linux and Macintosh that permit you to run most Windows software. If you aren't one that always needs the "latest and greatest", then you might consider waiting until you purchase a new computer with Vista pre-installed. I certainly wouldn't recommend that anyone rush out and upgrade as soon as Vista hits the market. Wait a while, possibly until the first patches are available or further reviews of the final market version are available. There also may be some "street pricing" that will lower your cost of upgrading. Vista appears to be an improvement over XP, but for the average user, it is not a "great leap forward".

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# First Class

## March/April 2007

1st Wed. (3/7, 4/4)

**7 p.m.** General Meeting

4th Wed (3/28, 4/28)

**7 p.m.** Internet SIG

3rd Monday (4/16, none in March)

**7 p.m.** Board of Directors



All meetings are at **Carlin Hall**, 5711 S. 4th St.,  
Arlington VA: East off of Carlin Springs Rd, just  
south of Arlington Blvd/Route 50.

# Remember Your Spring Backup!