The NCTCUG Journal

NCTCUG's July 28th Meeting: About Those Electronic Book Readers

Presented by Lorrin Garson, NCTCUG

Please join us at 7 PM on Wednesday, July 28th, in Carlin Hall Community Center for a fascinating discussion of the electronic gadgets that some bemoan as the death knell for paper-and-ink book publishing as we've known it.

There are approximately two dozen electronic book readers now on the market. In the United States, the most common devices are the (a) Amazon Kindles, (b) Barnes & Noble Nook, (c) Sony Readers, and (d) Apple iPads. The characteristics of these e-book readers will be discussed. In order to understand the dynamics of e-book reader development and competition, the following related topics will also be covered: (a) major stakeholders in e-books, (b) the source of material for e-books, (c) file formats used by e-books, (d) alternate means of electronic delivery, (e) the negative and positive attributes of e-book readers in general, and (f) factors consumers should consider in selecting an e-book reader.

The Technology Revolution[s] Go On — A Look Back and Ahead at Trends

By John White, a member of the ICON PCUG, Inc., New York. The ICON Graphic, Newsletter of the ICON PCUG, July 2009 www.iconpcug.org editor(at)iconpcug.org

Scholars of the revolution process remind us that, like France's, most revolutions are half over before the affected people know they are under way. Whether we have noticed or not, here are some well underway:

1. On-premises storage: Most users know the dangers of "going naked," i,e. without backing up data while hoping for the best. Remember those s-l-o-w hard drive backups on tape that always failed to create a full restore? We resolved, of course, to backup all the data, at least, on a bushel of floppies, but didn't get around to it. Iomega's ZIP disks held much more than 3.5" floppies but at too high a price. Write-once backup CDs were much cheaper and usable on all computers, but burning several tied up the computer and user quite a while. Still better were DVDs and automated external hard drives using USB or Firewire cables. Then came Vista, which rejected all my previous backup software programs. I still miss

Inside

SUMMER

Windows 7, Thanks, But No Thanks!

By Herb Goldstein, Editor, Sarasota PCUG, Florida www.spcug.org editor (at) spcug.org

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I am a devout XP user. It's not by any means perfect. It has its own set of quirks (like everything else), but it's better than anything that came before and it works quite well. It's like my house...I know where everything is. I can navigate it in the dark. I've got it furnished and decorated just the way I want it, and it took me, bit by bit, a long time to do. So why should I move across the street and start all over again? For whose benefit?

Some weeks ago, Microsoft provided their release candidate of Windows 7 free for all takers. I installed it on a spare hard drive and have been playing with it every now and then. It's a nice functional operating system, but from a practical standpoint it provides me with nothing that I really need or must have that's missing in XP. If you are starting as a new computer user with a new computer, it's just fine. In fact it will be on your new computer right from the get-go, want it or not.

For whatever the many reasons, there is no upgrade path to migrate from XP to Windows 7. You need to start from scratch reinstalling all your software programs, all their many updates and upgrades, and all the customized settings you have factored into them over the period of time. Now that's providing you even have your original installation disks or some record of those that you originally downloaded for which you have no installation disks at all. You will also need all their serial numbers that you were originally required to provide, if you still have them. Talk about monumental tasks!

As though that were not enough to completely turn off the bravest among you, Windows 7 has another curve ball to pitch at you. Whatever applications you want to install in Windows 7 must have perfectly valid drivers that it will recognize. Windows 7 is much more fussy about what it wants to approve. Many smaller software publishers whose applications you may now be using in XP may not have developed drivers that will work in Windows 7. You may well have to kiss some of your most fabulous freebies goodbye. The loudest argument I have heard by those urging the switch is that Microsoft will cease to recognize XP. If the automobile industry operated in similar fashion you would be forced to junk all cars more than a few years old.

So pardon me folks while I continue to avoid fixing what isn't broken. Unless and until Microsoft can offer a much better operating system that will easily migrate everything I am currently using in XP, thanks but no thanks!
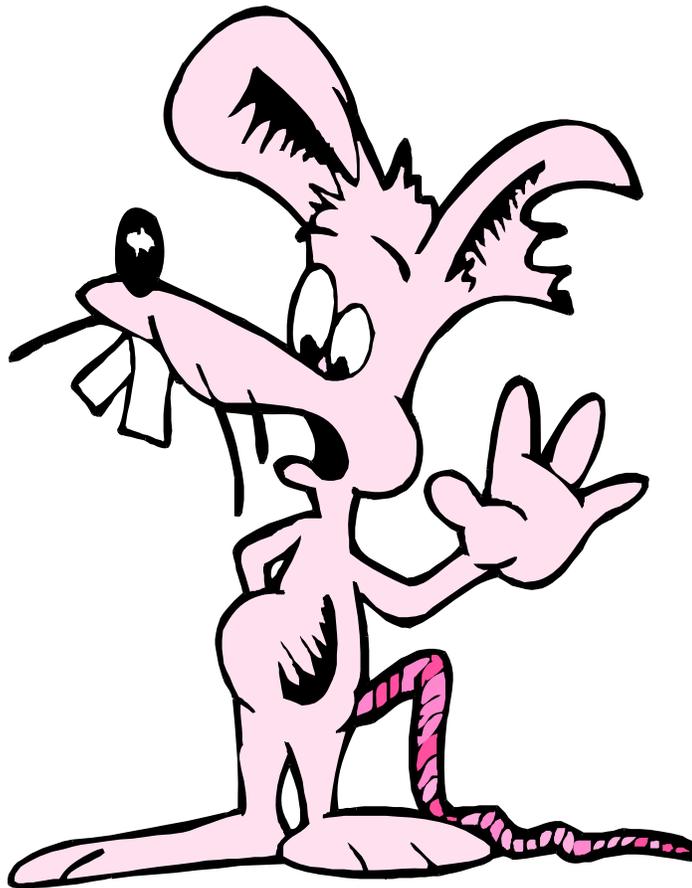
Windows 7 Upgrade – My Experience

By Sandy Berger, CompuKiss www.compukiss.com sandy (at) compukiss.com

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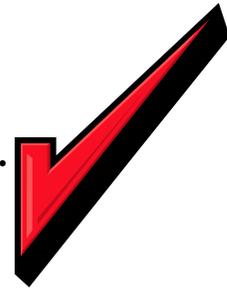
Those of you who follow me know that I really like Windows 7 and have no qualms about recommending it. This is not a program that you have to wait to purchase until the problems have cleared. I have been successfully using it for months and have just installed it on my everyday computer.

So if you are ready to buy a new computer, go right ahead and buy one with Window 7. However, if you are going to upgrade an older computer, there are a few things you should know.

First, I don't recommend upgrading an older computer running Windows XP. Although Windows 7 may run on your old XP computer, XP is more capable for computers with limited memory and outdated graphics. Also, if you upgrade from XP to 7, you have to do a clean install. (More on that later.)

Even if you are upgrading to Window 7 from Vista, there are a few things that you should know. My recent upgrade experience may help.

Last week I got an advance copy of Windows 7 and decided to upgrade my Vista computer.

There are two possible ways to upgrade: An in-place upgrade or a clean install. A clean install is preferable, but it means that all your data and your programs are wiped out. This is good because it puts your computer into a like-new status. However, a clean install requires a lot of work. It entails backing up everything, reinstalling all of the programs, transferring the data from a backup back to the computer after the upgrade, and readjusting any programs that you had previously customized. After listing the number of programs that I had installed on my computer, I decided that after a clean install it would probably take me at least 2 days to get my computer back to where it was. With time at a premium, I opted for an in-place upgrade. I had already installed all of the updates and service packs, so my computer was ready to be upgraded.

The first thing that I did, (and that everyone should do before upgrading), was to back up my data. I chose to use a program called True Image by Acronis to make a complete backup of everything on my computer. I put the backup on a portable hard drive. It was 350GB, so I expected this upgrade to take a long time.

Then I surfed over to the Microsoft website to check out their compatibility upgrade advisor for Windows 7. I installed this Microsoft program on
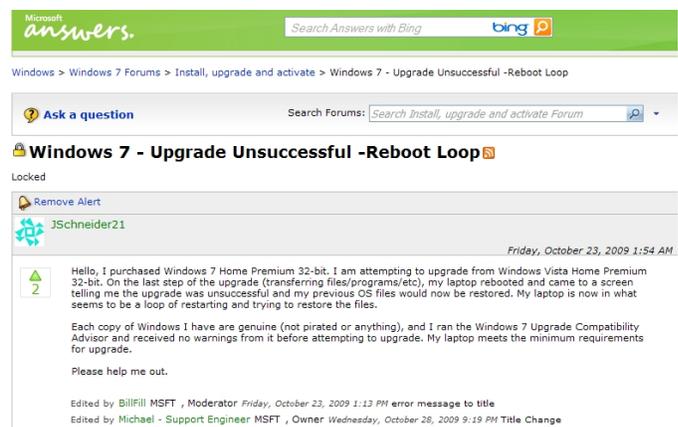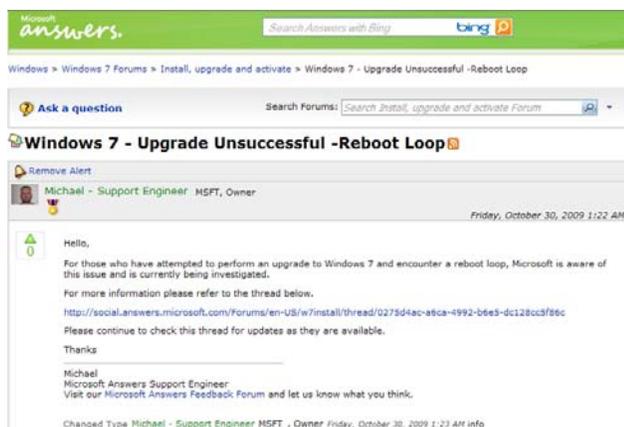
(Continued from page 3)

my computer and ran it. It told me that my Belkin wireless network needed a new driver for Windows 7and that my Logitech webcam might not work properly with Window 7. I surfed over to both manufacturers' websites and found that they had no specific drivers listed for Windows 7. Since I already had the most current Vista drivers, I decided to just go ahead with the upgrade.

I put the Windows 7 disk in the computer and clicked on "Install". I made a few choices, like choosing between an in-place and a clean install. To my surprise, the install program told me that I had quite a few incompatibility problems. In addition to the two devices that I had been warned about, it listed a printer that I had previously uninstalled and several games that also had been previously removed. However, it also listed iTunes as incompatible. I use iTunes everyday to sync my iPhone, so this could have been a deal-killer. Yet, I knew that I had the latest version of iTunes, so I just crossed my fingers and clicked "Next" to go on.

After that, the installation was easy. The computer pretty much did all the work, including rebooting several times. While a clean install can be accomplished in about ½ hour, my in-place install over 350 GB of programs and data on a pretty speedy computer took 3 hours.

Once the update was complete, I found myself at the Windows 7 desktop. There was a new desktop background and the taskbar had much larger icons (something that I like about windows 7), but other than that, all of my icons were there and my desktop looked pretty normal.

To my surprise, the Belkin wireless card that I had been warned about worked seamlessly. The Logitech Quick Cam, however, gave me an error. On a hunch, I reinstalled the webcam driver. Although this was the same driver that I had been using with Vista, Windows 7 now seemed to like it. It also functioned perfectly. Oh, and the iTunes program that I had been warned about, also worked perfectly except that I had to reauthorize the computer, which was a simple process.

I am not sure if Microsoft was a little too harsh in their assessments of incompatibilities or if I was just lucky. Since I did my upgrade before the actual launch of the Windows 7 product, Microsoft's Windows 7 Capability Center was not yet available. As you read this, however, it should be open. Just type "Windows 7 Compatibility Center" in the search box at the Microsoft website and you should be able to check the compatibility of most software and hardware.

Convert A PDF File To A Text File

By Sr. Dorothy Robinson, Newsletter Editor, The OMUG News Olympia Microcomputer User Group, Washington http://olymug.org srdorothy(at)gmail.com

Have you been wishing you had a piece of software that would convert PDF files to text files that you can edit? And maybe also didn't cost an arm and a leg?

BCL Technologies has such software called easyConverter Desktop that costs about $20. That sounds like a good buy to me. But it only works with Windows (2000, XP, Vista and Win 7). So that leaves a lot of people, namely Linux users, out in the cold.

The good news is that BCL also has a free, online utility that does the same thing. And your operating system doesn't come into it. Open your browser and go to http://pdfonline.com/pdf2word/index.as and take a look.

On the left side, under a header that says "Convert PDF to Word for Free" you'll see a place to browse your computer and select a file. Note that there is no need to provide your email address, since you'll just download the file directly.

Find your file and double click it (or click once then click Open), then click the Upload and Convert button. Press it *only once*, and wait; larger files may take a while to upload. The conversion is pretty fast, under a minute for the one or two page files I tried. There is a 2 MB limit on uploads, so really big files won't work.

This part is where, if you wanted to do a lot of files, or large ones, it would be great to have an application on your computer to do it—thus eliminating the time to upload.

The next step is downloading the text file. I'm not sure why the instructions say to Right Click on the link to download the file, because for me at least it didn't work. I **Left** Clicked instead and the download dialog opened.

You'll see that the file is a rich text file (.RTF or .rtf) which can easily be opened by Word, OpenOffice Writer, Abiword, or other word processors or text editors and be available for editing. When you save it you can save it as a .doc if you like.

The dialog asks, What should (your browser) do with this file? The first choice is to open the file with the default application (mine showed OpenOffice) or you can choose another from a drop-down list. The second choice is to save the file, and if you choose Save the file, your download manager will save it to the default location—or you might get a Save as dialog and choose where to save it. One caution: opening the file directly rather than downloading it got me a Read Only file, which of course I couldn't edit. So for editing purposes, save the file before opening.

Make your choice by clicking a radio button, then click OK. You now have a text file you can edit. And the quality is very nice, too—for **mostly text** documents. I tried a PDF file that I had originally created in OpenOffice Writer which contained a calendar in a table. The results were not pretty! And for a postal PDF which was a requisition form using tables, the results were somewhat better but still unusable since the tables overlapped, hiding some of the text.

On the other hand, I made a list of data (several rows and columns) in an OpenOffice spreadsheet, exported it to PDF, then uploaded it and converted it. When I downloaded this file, it was perfect—and perfectly editable.

For me, using Ubuntu Linux, this free, online version is a good thing. Windows users have a choice of the web version or the computer application. And pdf2word gives the best results I've seen for this kind of web application.

Adding An NAS Drive To Your Network (Part 2 of 2)

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

Last month I chronicled my experiences in choosing an NAS drive unit for my home network, and reviewed the features of the unit I chose, and assembling things, prior to the actual install of the unit. [*NCTCUG Ed. Note: See May 2010 NCTCUG Journal*] This month I'll go into the details of installing and configuring the unit on a home network.

The manual for the DNS-323 is probably the most comprehensive manual I've seen in a long time. It has complete instructions for installing and using the unit. There are lots of color images, and very clear info on each step of the installation process. You do not have to be a computer expert to install this device. If you follow each step carefully, the install process should proceed very smoothly.

The manual is a PDF file on the CD which comes with the unit. I personally always print out the manuals for all my important hardware and software. Things have certainly improved in recent years, and most manufacturers have taken steps to insure that users can properly install their hardware.

This article is about the NAS device that I used. Depending upon which NAS unit you purchase, the actual steps will of course differ. But the essence of doing the install is essentially the same for any similar device.

Activities Along The Way

Here is a list of the various tasks that will be performed during the instruction process for the DNS-323.

Access the drive bays by sliding the faceplate up until it unlatches from the device.

Once the faceplate is unlatched, pull it off the device, exposing the drive bays.

Insert a 3.5" SATA hard drive into each available drive bay. Make sure to align the drive connectors to the endpoints in the DNS-323. Gently push the drive in until it connects.
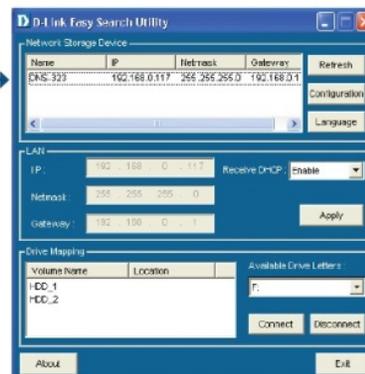
Reattach the faceplate to the front of the device.

Connect an Ethernet cable into the available Ethernet port. This cable should connect the DNS-323 to your local network.

Finally, connect the power adapter to the power receptacle.

Front Panel Buttons

Power Button: Press once to power on the DNS-323. Press and hold the button until it begins to blink to power down the DNS-323.

Drive LEDs: These LEDs will be solid BLUE when drives are connected but inactive. The LEDs will blink when the drives are being accessed, formatted or synchronized. They will illuminate AMBER if a drive has failed.

Activity LED: The Activity LED will be solid BLUE when there is an Ethernet connection. It will blink to indicate LAN traffic.

Setting Up The Unit

When first powered on, during the initial boot sequence, the DNS-323 will wait to be assigned an IP address via DHCP. If it does not receive a DHCP assigned IP address, by default it will have a self-assigned IP address of 192.168.0.32. It is recommended to use the included D-Link Easy Search Utility when accessing and configuring the DNS-323 for the first time. If you want to change this IP address before logging in or are unable to connect to the DNS-323 IP address, you can use the Easy Search Utility provided on the product CD to locate the device on your network and make any needed changes.

To run the Easy Search Utility, insert the DNS-323 CD into your CD-ROM drive. Once this has started running, the window below will appear. Then follow the steps as they are presented.

Along the way, all the necessary steps will take place to format and set up the unit. The formatting is a special format which is Windows compatible, but is neither NTSC or FAT32. Any information on the drive(s) you install in the unit will be wiped clean when the formatting is done.

Once again, the manual has detailed info on each step in the process, to assist users in making choices, when choices must be made.

How To Use The Unit After Setting It Up

Once the setup process is completed, the unit is ready to use. It will show in the drive listing for any machine which is connected to your network. The drive letters which were assigned will show along with all the usual drive letters for your machine. You can move, copy, & delete files just as you would for any drive.

For maximum utility, the NAS drive should be left on at all times, to insure that any computer on the network can access it. It does have a power saving feature that will put it to sleep after several minutes (5 minutes is the default), and it will use very little power in that mode. Once it has gone to sleep, it will take about 5 seconds for it to come back on, and spin up to full speed.

If you copy all/most of your important files onto the NAS drive, this will serve as a backup for these files. And they will be instantly available to all your other machines on your network**.** This can be very time saving when you want to access things like pictures et al.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site http://www.brcs.org/hirsch.ph. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a loose-leaf notebook for future reference. Remember, the PDF version offers full color, wherever color elements might be involved, and often images which could not be used in Boca Bits.

Club Election Notice

The Club Annual Meeting and Election will be at the regular meeting on October 6, 2010. Anyone interested in running for office please contact a board member. Ballots will also be sent out & received by email, as has been the practice the last few years.

Cryptography —
A Big Word That Helps Keep The Internet Secure

By Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida July 2009 Monitor
www.spcug.org president (at) spcug.org

You may have asked yourself some of the following questions. How secure is the internet? What has been done to make the Internet secure? How safe is my private information during an internet transaction? If so, read on; if you are a very trusting individual and figure that "they" will keep the internet secure, jump to the next article. During this time when the Internet provides essential communication between tens of millions of people and is being increasingly used as a tool for commerce, security has become a very important issue. And when it comes to computers, "security" is of concern on many different levels.

There is physical security that keeps your computer hardware from being stolen. There is software security that keeps people out of our private files. There is "malware" security, that keeps your computer software from being infected with viruses, spyware, worms and the like. And finally there is "network" security that keeps private data protected as it goes from one computer (or client) on the internet to another computer (or server) on the internet. This article deals with network security, which is ensured by applying cryptography to messages that are transmitted on the Internet.

Remember the "s" in "https://" and the little lock icon on the browser when you went to a "secure" website? Well, cryptography is behind all that security. Cryptography is used to secure Internet and even telephone communications. Cryptography is nearly as old as written language itself. It was invented to address the age-old question: How can I communicate with my friend, so that no one else will know what was communicated?

Cryptography becomes necessary whenever one is attempting to communicate private information over an "un-trusted" medium, such as the Internet. Typically, you can be sure that the message you send over the internet will get to its destination, but you cannot guarantee that intermediaries (computers along the way) will not be able to see and read your message, unless it is protected.

With a collection of not-so-expensive equipment and a good deal of knowledge, a message on the internet can be intercepted (sniffed), and if it is "plain text", it can be read. For mundane e-mail messages, this is not much of a concern, but for messages that contain private information, such as passwords or bank account or social security numbers, this could be an invitation for Identity Theft.

Cryptography to the rescue. Cryptography (from the Greek for "hidden writing") is the ancient science of encoding messages so that only the sender and receiver can understand them. Cryptography can be defined as the conversion of data (plain-text) into a scrambled code (cipher-text) that can be sent across a network, and deciphered by the rightful receiver at the other end.

There are two main techniques used to encrypt data, Symmetric and Asymmetric. Symmetric encryption uses the same key for encryption as it does for decryption. Symmetric encryption is also called Secret-key encryption because the key is kept a secret between the two cooperating parties.

Asymmetric uses separate keys for encryption and decryption. Asymmetric encryption is also called Public-key encryption because one of the keys is allowed to circulate in the public (and one is kept private).

Cryptography is now available to everyone thanks to the development of modern computers, which can perform more mathematical operations in a second than a human being could do in a lifetime. An ordinary PC, with the proper software, can produce codes of such complexity that the most powerful supercomputer using the best available software could not break them in thousands of years.

Before modern times and the personal computer, cryptography was concerned solely with message confidentiality. Message confidentiality is conversion

(encryption) of messages from a "plain-text" form into an incomprehensible one (cipher-text) for transmission and then back again to the original form, at the other end (decryption). This keeps the message unreadable by interceptors or eavesdroppers who do not have knowledge of the "key" needed for decryption of that message.

(With the advent of the personal computer and the proliferation of digital information, the field of digital message protection has expanded beyond only confidentiality concerns to include techniques for message integrity checking, identity authentication, digital signatures, and password protection all of which we will leave for future discussions.)

As stated above, Secret key cryptography refers to encryption methods in which both the sender and receiver share the same key. Secret key cryptography is ideally suited to encrypting long messages, providing privacy and confidentiality for messages typically used in computer to computer transactions.

Public Key Cryptography refers to methods in which two keys are owned by each participant, one for encryption (public key) and one for decryption (private key). Public Key cryptography is suited to short messages and is typically used to exchange "secret keys" between two computers. Public Key cryptography could, theoretically, also be used to encrypt messages but this is rarely done because Secret-key cryptography is about 1000 times faster than Public-key cryptography.

So, just how do these schemes work in our typical computer to computer (network) communications?

Secret-key and Public-key cryptography are used to setup and maintain a secure data path from a client (your computer browser) to a server (information or data storage system). Because Secret-key cryptography is best used for long messages, a secret key will be used to encode all messages during the transaction. But how do we get a secret key to be used by both computers for the transaction. In comes Public-Key cryptography.

Public-key cryptography, which is best suited for short messages, is used to send the secret key (which is short) from one computer to the other, so that both will have the secret key for encoding the messages that follow. The server has a public key for the client (your computer) and it encodes a "secret key" with that public key. It then sends the encoded message to the client and the client can then decode the message with its private key. The private key is used to decode the "secret key message" so that the client knows what to use as the secret key for subsequent message encoding (i.e., the decoded secret key).

This all sounds very complicated, and it is, but all of this is controlled by the "secure software protocols" and you, the user, don't have to get involved at all. (I've actually simplified the operation a bit, but the essence of how cryptography is used is still pretty accurate.)

So, with the use of Public-Key, and Secret-Key cryptography, you can rest assured that the messages you are sending over the Internet will not be of any value to anyone attempting to intercept such information. What more could you ask for — through the use of cryptography, the un-trusted Internet can now be used to send private messages, therefore providing secure communications, over the Internet, for everyone.

Conceptual View of the Internet

Server (Yahoo)

Server (Google)

Server (Microsoft)

Internet Cloud (TCP/IP)

Internet Explorer

ISP

Client (Browser)

Server (SPCUG)
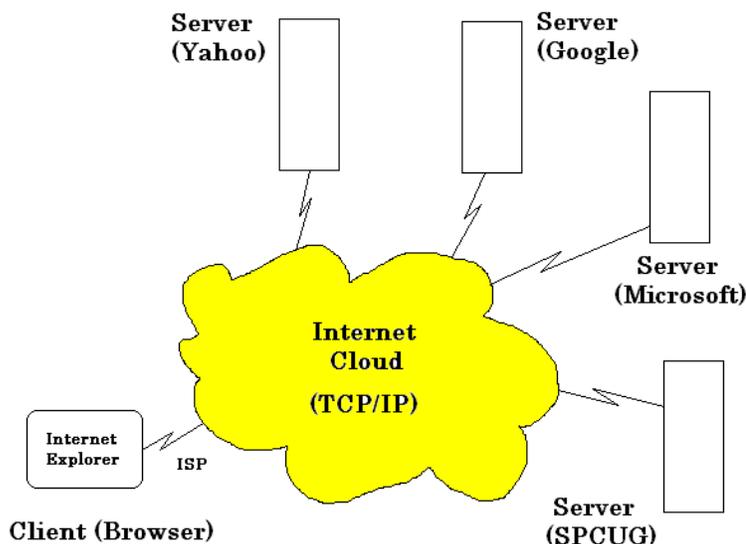
Computer Tips for Seniors

By Pamela Tabak

Reviewed by Gregory West, PC and Mac Instructor & Tech Columnist, Sarnia, Ontario, Canada; member of C.O.M.P. (Computer Operators of Marysville and Port Huron), MI http://www.bwcomp.org prospector16 (at) gmail.com

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All too often we find ourselves sinking in the mystery sea called Windows. We know what we would like to do but just can't figure out the "how". The further we click through our computers the worse our adventure becomes. We end up at a DEAD END, completely frustrated to the point of never wanting to turn the computer on ever again.

Several years ago Pamela Tabak, better known as "The Computer Tutor" started helping seniors with their computer issues. Pamela began offering a free 24/7 help desk. She would have people email her their computer problem and guaranteed to return an answer within 24 hours at no charge. Of course this took off quickly and became a huge success.

Born from this concept of an email help desk, Pamela developed a book comprising some of the most popular, nagging, questions that were asked. In Pamela's words she explains the book's conviction as "easy answers to frequently asked questions."

This book comes with easy to read and view coloured graphics depicting each step in the solutions process. There are three main sections: Knowledge Base, How To, and of course Answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

The "Knowledge Base" section deals with topics such as ergonomics, the health of both you and your computer. There is an interesting section on whether to "Recycle or Reuse Your Old Computer;" a section we all should read up on. The book does an excellent job of covering most other areas of computing topics including computer maintenance, Internet security, Flash Drives, Web Browsers, eBay and Emailing.

As I went through this book finding things I already knew, I found myself wondering what type of answer would go with the question, and then finding out various things I had either forgotten or didn't know ex-

isted. Going the extra mile, as Pamela does in this book, she has include several little "Tip" bits where you find yourself gathering even more quick and helpful information.

Whether you are a senior who is just starting out in the world of computing, or you have been around the block a few times with your hard drive; this book is a great read and a good reference book to keep nearby the desktop.

Published by Computer Tutor Inc. 2009
Cover Design by Linda Gonse
Pages: 204
USA: $24.95 plus shipping
www.computertutorinc.net/order.htm
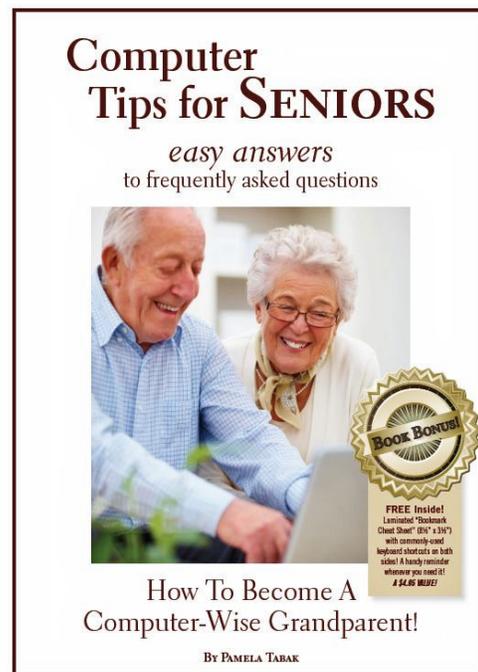
BeWARES!

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 a 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

Neat Things You Can Do With A Flash Drive

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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.
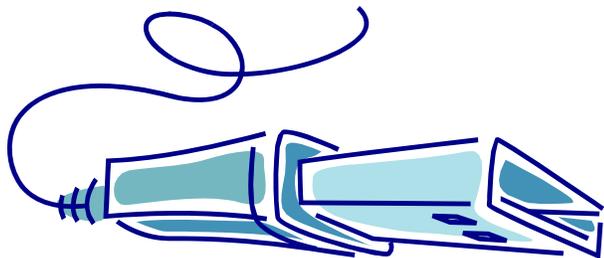
Everyone wants a faster system. With either Windows Vista or Windows 7, the built-in ReadyBoost feature can speed up your computer with a USB flash drive. ReadyBoost takes the storage space on a USB flash drive and converts it into an additional memory cache that supplements the main memory cache on 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 al 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?

The New Community Rules: Marketing On The Social Web

By Tamar Weinberg
Reviewed by Tammy Barbee
http://www.webmastertoolcenter.com
(Submitted by Gabe Goldberg)

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I spent a lot of time reading this book on social media as I was intrigued to find out more about it. I am familiar with some of the social media network but how to target a community is a different story. Social media is being used more than just traditional marketing to connect with your friends and family but, in turn, to connect with your clients and customers to engage them in the business or community that is being promoted.

The book has 12 great social media marketing points which are:

- An introduction to Social Media Marketing.

- Set goals by using the SMART method (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely).

- Achieve social media mastery by building relationships and listening to consumers.

- Play an active role within the community by participating and listening to build a strong reputation in the community.

- Communicate, influence, and learn by using blogs within the community.

- Use micro blogging(Twitter) as part of community and using other Twitter tools(TweetDeck) to engage consumers.

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"Bounceback," which was included with an external Seagate and made file-by-file backups, not just images. Today, with 1-T drives going for a little over $100, nearly all of one's data and pictures, at least, can be salvaged easily from such a drive. Solid-state drives use even less energy. Their prices and capacity are tracking Moore's Law right on sched-ule. Within five years, spinning-platter hard drives will be found only on mu-seum shelves near the eight-inch floppy drives. This month's 8-Gb thumb drives should be replaced with similarly-priced 64-Gb drives by next July. These, also known as flash drives or key drives, sometimes make mov-ing files between computers (by "Sneaker-net") easier than getting ad-ministrator privileges and moving them via a network.

2.   Off-premises storage: This long-needed form of "cloud computing" meets an urgent need. Gmail pio-neered—and inspired its competitors to offer—2-Gb per account of free permanent storage of email and attachments on their distant sites. Web download sites offer a free utility to treats one's Gmail account as a regular drive visible in the My Computer folder. With a high-speed Internet connection, the drive becomes a place to store files without opening email. OK, that is the theory anyway. My Gmail account opens fine in the regular way, but my Gmail drive does not. After being told the Login failed, I clicked on the help file to find the cure, but instead got this message: "The Help for this program was created in Windows Help format, which depends on a feature that is not in-cluded in Windows Vista." Arrrggghh. Why am I not surprised?

For other choices for off-site storage that can be accessed from elsewhere, two popular choices are Mozy.com and Carbonite.com. Mozy, which boasts over a million customers, offers 2-Gb free storage per computer or unlimited backup for one computer at $4.95 a month. Carbonite offers a 15-day free trial, but then unlimited stor-age costs $5 monthly. Another highly-rated service, ElephantDrive.com charges $4.95. Idrive, gets mixed reviews. Its pricing seems a bit vague, starting with 2-Gb Free Basic, then 10-Gb more free if the user supplies five email ad-dresses of potential customers. I use Carbonite but Mozy's impressive ratings might convince to try it on another computer. One note of caution about selecting one other than Mozy or Carbonite: One of the Big Two competing with Mozy not long back was Xdrive. It shut down in January, 2009. If we want to trust our

Washington Area Computer User Group

WACUG Meetings will be held on August 21 & Sept. 18 from 12:30 to 3:30 pm. WACUG will hold joint meetings with **OPCUG** [www.olligmu.org/~opcug/]

Meetings will be held at the **Osher Lifelong Learning In-stitute** [www.olli.gmu.edu/] at George Mason University, 4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax, VA, known as the Tallwood Campus.

Topics

August: Building a Simple Database;
     Learn 30 - Roboform Password Manager

 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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data to distant strangers, I only trust the current Big Two. At just $60 per year per account, even a one-terabyte external hard disk costs more.

3. Device convergence: The Blackberry and iPhone stretched the minds of tech enthusiasts. Thousands of downloadable apps and functions quickly arrived for sale. Wireless Web access spreading throughout much public space, computers, cameras, and once-mundane cell phones have merged with GPS. This melding in turn raises expectations, and inspires market options to meet them. Intel's tiny, cheap, low-powered Atom microprocessor quickly led to ultra-small Netbooks powered by the almost-abandoned Windows XP Basic. With improved batteries and solid-state storage drives, some of these little machines can fit in a top-coat pocket and remain self-powered on a flight nine hours on a flight from New York to Los Angeles and maybe to Hawaii. Tech-poor nations that were never wired for telephones have skipped over the copper-on-poles era and have cell phone (read "Web") access in areas far from pave roads. Even the U.S., which is not in the top dozen of "wireless access" nations will soon

convert remaining water towers, church steeples, power-plant chimneys, and bare hilltops to points of access. Satellites and microwave transmitters can fill most of the remaining gaps. The changes streaming at us with such speed compare to telescoping the Pony Express, continental telegraph and telephone systems, commercial radio, and television into one generation. In our immediate future we will adopt or adapt still-developing technologies now originating in nations that used to look to us for innovation.

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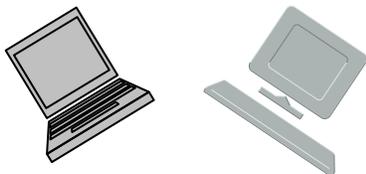
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Thank You!

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- Use Facebook, MySpace, and LinkedIn to create profiles to connect with friends, family, and consumers. Beyond the three above are others that are used in other countries such as Friendster, Orkut, Bebo, and hi5.

- Find answers to questions using Wikipedia, Yahoo! Answers, and many more.

- Use social bookmarking such as Stumble Upon , delicious.com, and Digg

- Promote content and bring visitors by using social news site such as Sphinn and Reddit.

- Share photos on Flickr, share videos on YouTube, and use podcasting.

- Gather from the eleven points above how to implement social media marketing into your marketing plan.

The book is useful for those who are starting out and want to know what social media marketing is, how it can help with their business, and how to implement these ideas, techniques, and tactics into their business. It also points out various examples of how several companies use a form of popular and non-popular social media to stay involved with their consumers. Therefore, I recommend this book for those who have an interest in knowing more about social media because social media is not a one-sided conversation; it is about staying engaged with the community.

August/September 2010

1st Wed. (8/4, 9/1)
7 p.m. General Meeting

2nd Wed. (8/11, 9/8)
Online-Only Webinar using Skype *New!*

4th Wed (8/25, 9/22)
7 p.m. Internet SIG

3rd Monday (9/20; none in August)
7 p.m. Board of Directors

Meetings are at **Carlin Hall**, 5711 S. 4th St., Arlington VA: East off of Carlin Springs Rd, just south of Arlington Blvd/Route 50. See website for directions to post-meeting pizza gathering.

Back to School Time!

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