

THE NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ALAMO PC ORGANIZATION

PC Alamode

OPERATING SYSTEM ISSUE

www.alamopc.org

January 2010

\$5.00

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page 19

Windows control panel basics
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Alamo PC Organization

Alamo PC Organization is a non-profit organization whose mission is to increase its members knowledge and effective use of personal computers through presentations, instructional programs, other membership services and access to the expertise of other members.



To register for a Class (when resumed), Study Group or Sr. Comp classes call:

Registration number **210-736-0700**

If you **can't access your issue** of *PC Alamode* or have questions about your **membership** e-mail:

membership@alamopc.org

If you have questions about Alamo PC call:

Alamo PC office number **210-736-0700**

If you have comments about classes call

Linda Bianchi **210-561-2278**

If you have questions about advertising e-mail

Joseph de Leon
send e-mail to editor@alamopc.org

Please send change of address and other correspondence to:

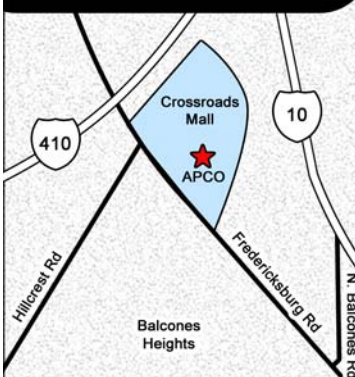
Alamo PC Organization
PO Box 65180
San Antonio, TX 78265-5180

Meetings

Monthly program meetings are normally held the second Monday of the month. Unless otherwise specified, meetings are held at 4888 Whirlwind Drive, located near the intersection of Loop 410 and IH-35 North starting at 7:00PM. Open to all members and the public.

The Board of Directors meets normally on the Tuesday prior to the monthly General Meeting. The BoD meets in the food court located in the lower level of Crossroads Mall, Loop 410 at the intersection with I-10 starting at 6:30PM. Any changes will be announced via the Voice Mail/Hot Line (736-0700) and on the Calendar of Events and/or Web site. Open to all members.

Alternate Meeting Location:
Crossroads Mall
(see page 3 for map of Crossroads Mall)



General Meeting Location:
4888 Whirlwind



Jan. Calendar

Tuesday Jan. 5, 2010
Board of Directors meeting
6:30 PM Crossroads Mall
Loop 410 at I-10 (see map)

Monday Jan. 11, 2010
General meeting
7 PM 4888 Whirlwind
Loop 410 at I-35 (see map)

Board of Directors

President	Bill Klutz	532-9122 (Home)	president@alamopc.org
Secretary	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	secretary@alamopc.org
Treasurer	Billy Samples	646-0047 (Home)	treasurer@alamopc.org
Education	TBD		education@alamopc.org
Operations	Cary Hall	736-0700 (Learning Center)	learncenter@alamopc.org
Marketing	TBD (Steve Tech)	675-2880 (Home)	marketing@alamopc.org
Communications	TBD		communications@alamopc.org

Executive Service Officers and other important numbers

Office Center, 4888 Whirlwind

736-0700

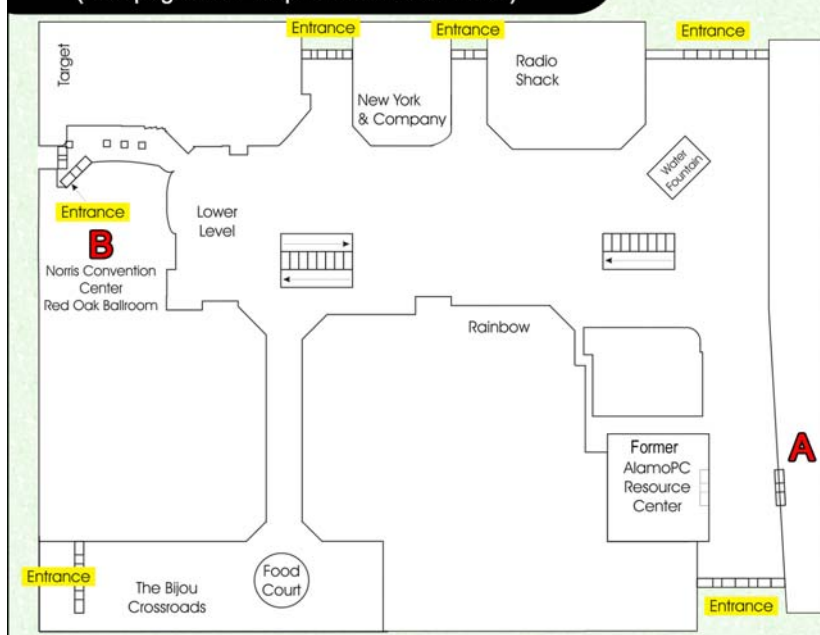
FAX 736-0032

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Past President/Programs	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	dsteward@texas.net
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Study Groups Coordinator/Ed	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	education@alamopc.org
Special Projects	Joe Brazell	370-2207 (Office)	projects@alamopc.org
Registrar	Linda Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	Registrar@alamopc.org
Webmaster	Mike Bianchi	561-2278 (Home)	Webmaster@alamopc.org
Lab/Network Administrator	Gary Grieve	492-5066 (Home)	netadmin@alamopc.org
Trade Shows	Steve Tech	675-2880 (Home)	stephentechnjr@yahoo.com
APCUG Representative	David Steward	662-8606 (Home)	dsteward@texas.net
Editor, PC Alamode Magazine	Joseph de Leon	unlisted	editor@alamopc.org

For Study Groups and Classes, phone: 736-0700

Crossroads Mall (lower level)

(See page 2 for map to Crossroads Mall)



Alternate Meeting Location

We may meet in several different locations in the mall. Sometimes at the Convention across the hall from our former Learning Center (A) of in the Norris Convention Center (B) near Target. Sometimes we don't know until the day of the meeting. It would be a good idea to check the website (alamopc.org) or call (736-0700) before you come.

For more information call 532-9122

Regular Meeting Location

4888 Whirlwind Drive
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PC Alamode

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EDITOR

Joseph de Leon

INTERIM PRODUCT REVIEW COORDINATOR

David Steward

ADVERTISING

Joseph de Leon

PUBLICATION SUBMISSIONS: Please check with the editor regarding submitting ads. **Deadline for submissions is the first of the month preceding publication,** e-mail to:

editor@alamopc.org

Joseph de Leon, Editor, PC Alamode
editor@alamopc.org

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product reviews

Hardware Review: Apple iPod Touch
Software Review: Registry First Aid
Hardware Review: Wireless Notebook Mouse

Ad rates effective January 2005

Rate frequency.	1 x	3 x*	6x*	12 x*
		Per insertion		
Full pg. (7 ¹ / ₄ " w x 9 ¹ / ₂ " h)	\$274	\$260	\$246	\$238
Half pg. (7 ¹ / ₄ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	144	138	130	121
Half pg. (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 9 ¹ / ₂ " h)	144	138	130	121
Quarter pg.(3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 4 ¹ / ₂ " h)	74	72	64	62
Bus. card (3 ¹ / ₂ " w x 2" h) **	43	41	39	37

*Consecutive months

**To be paid in advance

PC Alamo Links List



Gizmodo

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

Gizmodo is a blog about gadgets and technology. Started in 2002, Gizmodo has grown to be Gawker Media's largest blog, bringing in upwards of 100 million page views a month in traffic. We post about a variety of electronics, as well as all sorts of things gadget geeks might enjoy.



Tech Crunch

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

Tech Crunch is a weblog dedicated to obsessively profiling and reviewing new Internet products and companies. In addition to covering new companies, we profile existing companies that are making an impact (commercial and/or cultural) on the new web space.

The first of the year is often filled with both joy and concern. Joy over what the New Year holds for us and concern over how we will deal with those things that don't go our way.

In this issue, I gathered articles about operating systems. For many of you, the New Year will mean a new operating system, even the latest version of Windows. You can learn some of the ins and outs in the Windows section. There are also articles for those of you who choose not to upgrade.

You can also learn about Ubuntu, an open source operating system with a lot of power. Same goes for Linux, which has been around for ages in many different flavors. It could make for a nice alternative to using the Windows operating system.

I hope you'll enjoy reading the reviews, which include the iPod Touch and a cool wireless notebook mouse.

Here's wishing you all a splendid New Year and please help us make Alamo PC all you hope it will be through to 2011.

Joseph de Leon, Editor

<editor@alamopc.org>



Joseph de Leon, Alamo PC

Joseph has worked in the graphics industry for more than 10 years.

President's Message

Bill Klutz

"January" - New Year, M. L. King Jr., Challenger, Challenges

This month marks a few things of interest to many: 1st - End of the Old Year (2009) and one year since the Alamo PC Learning Center at Crossroads Mall ceased operation. (Officially December 31st was the day. It was a great run, and many were helped over the years, but high rent, declining membership, waning interest in the organization and shrinking finances forced the business decision by board members.) Unfortunately, we have not escaped rent (although much reduced), declining membership, waning interest in the organization and shrinking finances. (More on this situation below.)

The 1st is also the first day of the New Year (2010), for those who use the same calendar as the US. Hopefully, it should also mark the end of the Holidays, the end of Parties, the end of left over food, the end of decorations, the end of sales (but maybe not since there was less than the expected participation by consumers in Nov-Dec), the end of feeling like you have been awake since just before Thanksgiving, the end of slow work weeks, and the end of all the other things that come with the last 35-40 days of any year; 15th - Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday; 19th - Martin Luther King, Jr Day (observed the third Monday in Jan; Legal Holiday; his birth, life and dream remembered); 28th - Christa McAuliffe Day (remembering her and that Challenger exploded January 28, 1986).

This month's article will be a little shorter than usual. With the end of year holidays behind us and the beginning of a new year upon us, not much happen this first month. It is hoped that the ending of the year will bring a resurgence in economic growth that builds throughout the year, and as a result jobs will be available for those who are currently not employed. Hopefully this will materialize!

The December BOD meeting was held, but only three members (Me, David Steward and Steve Tech) and the webmaster (Mike Bianchi) attended. (More on what took place a little later.)

At the December General Meeting David Steward provided some info on News Groups, Bit torrent, and answered some related questions on each. He also touched on some other items of general interest to the 17 people in attendance.

It is the last day of 2009 and David Steward has indicated he will be the presenter for the January General Meeting (11th). Since he has not provided any information on what he will cover I can only hope he has something interesting and beneficial worked out for the meeting. The meeting, unless otherwise noted on the web site, will be at our current office location (4888 Whirlwind, in NE San Antonio). It is once again in David Steward hands, so we will have to wait to see what actually transpires! Since things can change, even at the last minute, check the website for the latest information about the General Meeting.

As I have said in many preceding messages, overall interest in User Groups at the corporate and membership level continues to wain. As I also have pointed out in many previous messages, this fact is confirmed by the ever declining Alamo PC membership (only about 10 new members since November 2008), plus the fact we have not had a full compliment of board members (at least one vacancy) for the past four years.

With the declining number of individuals who are currently serving the organization in a board member capacity, and who have been willing to continue serving, I have said, "the future of OUR organization appears to be dimming rapidly." That, coupled with the fact that declining membership has caused declining funds to allow the organization to continue as it once was.

Since almost all of our new members were previously obtained from walk-in traffic at the Learning Center (when we were in Crossroads Mall, and that luxury no longer exists due to our move) we have suffered. And, remaining members have not been as helpful, as hoped, in obtaining new members. So, the point has arrived when remaining funds will no longer allow the Alamo PC Organization to continue operating for much longer.

At the December BOD meeting it was decided to try and have the Alamo PC Organization "presence" remain for as long as possible. With that in mind, monthly meetings will continue for as long as possible, but in order to conserve funds for the longest possible "presence," phone service would be discontinued on the last day of 2009 and unless a free web host web can be obtained by the day after the January General Meeting (12th), web service will also cease. The Alamo PC magazine will also cease to be published (if not with the January issue, certainly with the February issue.) Our rental space will be paid through March, and based on funds available an evaluation will be made about additional time. (With remaining funds being as low as they are, it looks like a presence will only be able to be maintained for a few more months in 2010.)

Continued on page 8

These actions will allow Alamo PC to pay existing and new short term bills, and may provide some funds for the rent to be continued past March of this year.

I have been a member of Alamo PC since the early 90's, and have tried to serve the Organization in various capacities. In 2003 I was nominated as "President Elect" and began serving in that capacity in October of that year. In October 2004 I became "President" and have continued to serve in that capacity, since no one has indicated a desire to be "President Elect" or "President."

When formed, the mission of Alamo PC was stated as "to increase its members knowledge and effective use of personal computers through presentations, instructional programs, other membership services and access to the expertise of other members." Over the years that mission has been accomplished, albeit with declining effectiveness. I say that because individuals born since Alamo PC was founded in 1983 have grown up with computers, most individuals who were about 25 then were associated with computers through their jobs, and those who were about 50 have moved to the 75 year figure and many of that grouping are no longer with us. I have spoken of this over the past few years as one of the primary reasons for our decline in membership. I believe the more focused reason, however, is the lack of General Meeting interest, primarily because of a lack of long term scheduling and available information about the presentations. I am sure I would have disagreement from one or more on that statement.

As, I have said before, "the future of OUR organization ... [rests] ... in the hands of its members. Whether WE continue (or not) depends on OUR interest and involvement. But, it primarily depends on membership renewals and/or financial support. Without those, we will not be able to meet our financial obligations and additional 'business decisions' will have to be made that will affect everyone." "Business decisions" have been made and soon "it will be like the loss of a friend or family member, and will impact those in the community desiring to learn about computers or improve their computer skills."

I can only hope everyone had an enjoyable holiday period and many good things will be in each of your lives during this new year. Thanks for allowing me to try and serve each member, although I have misgivings about my service to the Alamo PC Organization.

Anyone having questions regarding any area addressed or matter pertaining to the Alamo PC Organization, and future proposed plans may refer them to membership@alamopc.org (Steven Tech) or to me at either one of the following: president@alamopc.org, or privately at wkklutzjr@juno.com). We will try to provide information relating to the request.

January Program

Bill Klutz

It is the last day in December, and David Steward has scheduled himself to be the presenter for the January General Meeting. So, unless I hear other wise, the meeting location will be at our current office location (4888 Whirlwind, SAT). Since things can change at the last minute, please check the Alamo PC web site (www.alamopc.org) for information on the meeting and the location. Make plans now to come and bring some friends. As always, we hope to have an interesting presentation.

Volunteer of the Year

Bill Beverley



Computer Briefs *With Bill Beverley*

Search engine performance

Google isn't the only search engine although one well used by many people because it has reached a trillion pages as of last year. There is also Mahalo <<http://mahalo.com>> which provides reviews and comments on Web sites to help bring up more relevant results. You're also likely to find deeper content by using topic specific search engines known as vertical interest sites, such as <<http://www.snooth.com>>, which is a search engine and community site for wine lovers. Organized wisdom <<http://organizedwisdom.com>> is a search site for health information. Seamlessweb <<http://Seamlessweb.com>> includes menus and restaurant reviews and also allows users searching for lunch order it online.

ComputerFest is a collection of local and statewide dealers under one roof offering rock-bottom prices on all your computer needs. All of our dealers are independent wholesalers, so each conducts business separately. Most of the dealers will accept credit cards, but with cash you can usually get the best deals. And new products are almost always backed up with a warrantee, so you and your wallet can always feel comfortable with your purchases.

What you can find at the show:

- New Complete Systems
- New Hardware
- Newest Software Titles
- Printers, Monitors, Scanners
- Ink-Jet Recharge Kits
- Imaging Devices
- Internet Services
- Used Hardware
- Multimedia Upgrades
- Shareware
- Diagnostic Equipment
- Cables & Connectors
- Bare Bone Systems
- Computer Related Books
- Refurbished Systems, Monitors

Location:

Live Oak Convention Center
8101 Pat Booker Road
San Antonio, TX.

Show Dates:

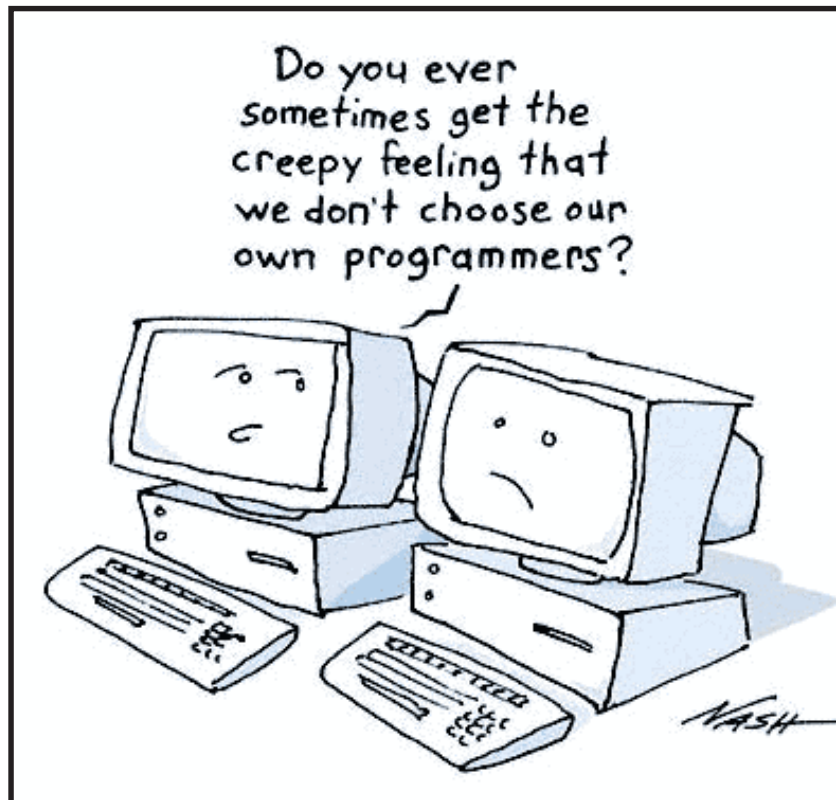
Dates to be announced

more info at <http://www.pcshows.com/>



Funny Bytes

Ken Nash & Randy Glasbergen



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www.glasbergen.com



"I've installed a comprehensive program that will protect our computer against viruses, trojan horses, worms, cooties, hissy fits, connipions, and the heebie-jeebies."



Computer PM Meter

Bill Beverley, Alamo PC

Bill is retired military and an intermediate computer enthusiast who has been an APCO member for seven years. He has contributed for the past six years.

Cellular cards and Wi-Fi are necessary items for people with laptops. One of these options isn't necessarily better than the other because many people rely on both of them. A cellular card connects a laptop to a cellular network. That means you can access the Internet wherever there is cellular service. There are drawbacks to cellular cards. They can be expensive. You can expect to pay \$60 or \$70 per month for service. They also have a monthly download limit which is usually five gigabytes. Exceeding the limit will incur high fees. In comparison, a Wi-Fi card lets you connect at wireless hotspots. The Internet connection is piped in to a wireless access point. Wireless equipment can then use the signal. Unfortunately Wi-Fi has a limited range. You must be within about 100 feet of the wireless access point. Many hotels and airports provide Wi-Fi. You can also connect at cafes, libraries and other public places. Some Wi-Fi hotspots are free. Others charge for the service. Usually, this is by the hour or day. Virtually every laptop includes a Wi-Fi card these days. Do not buy a laptop that doesn't have one. You may want a cellular card in addition to Wi-Fi. It will be handy if you can't find a hotspot. But even a cellular card may not get service in the boondocks.

Driver Updates

You can go online for Automatic Driver Updates. Here are some Web sites for that purpose. Driver Detective www.drivershq.com gives you access to millions of device drivers. As it locates available drivers for devices, it scan your PC with a Driver Scanning Engine. DriverScanner 2009 www.liutilities.com manages and installs the latest drivers in order to renew your system. When scanning for old drivers, it classifies each driver by determining what type of update it requires. RadarSync 2009 PC Updater www.radarsync.com helps your computer run safely and increase its life span by keeping your hardware drivers and software applications up-to-date at all times. The RadarSync 2009 PC updater is free unless you subscribe to RadarSync Premium, which is \$29.95 for a year subscription. Driver Magician www.drivermagician.com is a program that backs up, restores, updates, and removes device drivers. DriverCure www.drivercure.com has some unique built-in security features that protect your PC from malicious driver code and lost driver data. Driver Genius Professional Edition 9 www.driver-soft.com has a Driver Download Manager that makes it easy to view drivers are available and how many are required for associated devices. It also informs you of the size of each download. DriverAgent www.driveragent.com patrols for the newest drivers from companies in order to increase your PC's performance and repair glitches.

ID Thief

There are many computer users who have fallen into the trap of scammers by joining Internet social networks. Some of these networks have software programs which if downloaded infect the person's computer. In like manner if someone clicks on video links the same thing will happen to this individual. To avoid problems on social networks or anywhere else online, follow these precautions:

1. Don't click on links provided in message even from friends unless you have checked them out with a phone call or off website email to that person.
2. Get program updates by going to the company's Web site and not through a provided link.
3. Make your social network account private so that only friends can see your information.
4. Scan your computer regularly with an updated antivirus program.
5. Be suspicious of anyone who asks for money over the Internet.

PDF File

The PDF file format is one of the best ways to share documents with other people. All you need to open a PDF file is the ubiquitous (and free) Adobe Reader. You don't need to worry about compatibility issues. Your document will open on virtually any computer. And the formatting will be preserved. So, there will be no surprises when the document is opened. Unfortunately, Acrobat, the industry standard in PDF creation, is a costly program. Unless you're a business user, it can be difficult to justify the expense. Well, there is an easy solution to that: <www.PrimoOnline.com>. It's a totally free way to create a PDF file. And it works with over 300 different file types. Just enter your e-mail address and upload your file. Then, click a button. You'll get the PDF file in your inbox.

Google Alerts

To the surprise of many people, they may find their names on Google. If you haven't googled your name, it would be a good idea to check that Web site. In the even you find your name there and want to keep track of the latest items about yourself on Google, then set up a Google Alert for your name. Go to www.google.com, click More, and select Even More from the drop-down menu.

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Next click Alerts and on the next page, enter the search keyword you want to keep track of, in this case your name. You can also select the type of search result you're interested in, choose how often you receive alerts, and designate an email account to receive the alert from Google.

Google Street Maps

Google Maps <www.mapsgoogle.com> has a powerful feature called Street View. Google has actually photographed thousands of miles of roads and spliced them together to create a unified image. To see the view from the street where you're going, click and drag the icon that looks like a person to the appropriate location. From there, you can move forward and backward to see more of the area.

Internet Explorer 8

If you have had trouble installing Internet Explorer 8 (IE8), here is a possible solution. IE8 is compatible with Windows Vista, WinXP SP2 and SP3. You may have need to run Windows Update so that you're sure to have the latest updates or service packs that IE8 needs to install. There are two ways to access Windows update. In Vista, go to the start menu, select All Programs, and choose Windows Update from the list. The resulting window will show which updates are available, and you can view information about each one by clicking View Available Updates. You can also install updates directly from the window by clicking Install Updates. You can also access Windows Update by navigating to <update.microsoft.com>. Windows Update will automatically scan your computer for needed updates. To install the most important updates, simply click the Express button. If updating your computer doesn't allow you to install IE8, try updating your antivirus or anti-malware programs. Check your protection software's Help section if you are unsure of how to update using this option.

Phishing Filter

Phishing Filter is designed to warn or block you from potentially harmful Web sites. It's available in Windows Internet Explorer 7 for Windows XP Service Pack 2 (SP2), and Windows Vista. It is also available in the new Windows Live Toolbar for users of Internet Explorer 6 and above.

Preezo vs PowerPoint

PowerPoint presentations are a staple for professionals. They are a good way to share information with coworkers. They're second-to-none when you want to promote your business. Unfortunately, not all PowerPoint presentations are without problems. For example, a recipient might not be able to open your presentation. Preezo <www.preezo.com> can help you avoid these problems. It is a free, online alternative to PowerPoint. Because it is Web-based, you never need to worry about file compatibility. Nor should files ever become corrupted. And your presentation is accessible everywhere you have an Internet connection. Preezo is easy to use. You can create presentations in seconds. Power users may miss PowerPoint's advanced features. But most people will appreciate the simplified controls. When you finish your presentation, share it with others. With Preezo, you send a link to the presentation. There are no bulky files to mail! Or, perhaps you want to embed it in a Web page.

Search Engine

USA.gov, formerly known as FirstGov.gov, is an absolutely mammoth search engine/portal that gives the searcher direct access to searchable information from the United States government, state governments, and local governments. Find out more about USA.gov in my profile titled USA.gov. USA Government Grants Free Grants for Business, Women, Homes, College and Personal Needs <www.USAGovernmentGrants.Org>. Search Public Records Search Public Records for Judgments Liens, Filings. Local State Federal <www.GOV-Records.com/public_records>. "The Library of Congress is the nation's oldest federal cultural institution and serves as the research arm of Congress. It is also the largest library in the world, with millions of books, recordings, photographs, maps and manuscripts in its collections." <www.Healthfinder.gov> is one of the best places to find government-related health and human services information on the Web. Over 1500 health-related organizations are represented here. Find old friends, family & lovers. Or see who is looking for you <www.reunion.com>.

Search & investigate people now Online people record resources at <www.People-Search.Govt-Files.com>. Search the Web for people by name, location, sex, more at <www.wink.com>.

To find current Phone, Address, Age, etc., go to <www.People.Search.Intelius.com>.

Scheduling Web Site

Getting friends and family together for dinner or an outing can be a difficult task because we all have different schedules. You could play phone tag to work out a time to meet up, or you could just set a time and hope everyone shows. A better idea would be to try Presdo <<http://www.presdo.com/>>. This simple Web site will help you find a mutually agreeable time. You start by entering an event and a suggested time. Once you do that, you can invite others to view the event. Guests can suggest other times if they so choose. Based on others' responses, you can opt to change the meeting time.



From the Deals Guy

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click <Bobclick@mindspring.com>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>> for past columns and some interesting articles.

While back, I mentioned my lightning strike and replacing my damaged router with a new one by D-Link. I'm told that D-Link has many glowing reviews, but my experience has been just the opposite. It stops working whenever it feels like it and if I switch the Ethernet cable from the router directly into the modem without rebooting either the modem or the computer, the computer accesses the Internet OK, and faster than it did before. When I get the router running again, my network connected printer no longer prints and I have to get Ricoh's help to reconfigure the IP addresses so my printer works. The Ricoh techs have been great. I've tried reconfiguring the printer using the printer's manual, but have not mastered working with IP addresses so far. The D-Link router tech support also leaves a lot to be desired; in fact, they sometimes brush you off whether they get the router working or not, and they're sometimes hard to understand. Once they advised me to upgrade the firmware and quickly got rid of me. Updating the firmware didn't help.

Last week that router quit working twice and I decided I'd had enough of that piece of junk, so I bought another router on sale, but this one is a Netgear, as was my last one, which worked great for a couple of years, until the lightning strike. The Netgear has a disk to help set it up (so did the D-Link) and this Netgear is working fine, but my printer again had to be reconfigured. I'll see if D-Link will let me return the router for them to check, but at this point, it doesn't matter to me. I've had enough of D-Link.

*Gotta Keep Those Costs Down

How many people do you know who have been let go by their employer lately, even though they might have been with them for years and have an excellent attendance and work record? Lately, I know quite a few of those people. They go to work one day only to be told that a cut is being made, and it is them. Usually the employee has likely been with the company the longest. I believe that's the corporate way of keeping the bonus up by getting rid of employees who are paid the most. Disregard the knowledge, dependability, and experience they have for taking good care of customers. All those years of being a responsible and prudent employee meant nothing. Most of the ones I know had to immediately collect their personal items and were escorted off the property like some kind of criminal, which doesn't make them feel very good. An older person has a difficult task finding a job, unless you get lucky, and older can mean over 35 these days.

*Time To Help Pay Back The Stimulus Loans

I'm sure there will be several articles soon about doing your income tax return free, but I'll add my two cents worth on that topic now. There are several ways to do your income tax at no cost, but my favorite is "Tax Act," <<http://www.taxact.com>> which has a free version and a pay version. The free version does your tax return just fine, except that it pesters you frequently about the advantages of their pay version. I used the free version the first year I tried it and it did what I needed just fine. I had already taken my data to a free preparation service and just wanted to compare the results. Tax Act actually found a mistake in the one I just had done for free.

The following year I decided to use the deluxe version (right now they are offering it to me for \$12.95) because that one brings forward all of the information from your previous year's return, saving a lot of typing and possible errors. I also called their tech support a couple years ago for help with my "green" credits and had good response with it.

Also, don't forget AARP's free tax help for seniors. We really need to pay our taxes so we can repay the Chinese and keep them from repossessing the USA for nonpayment of our loan. I doubt I could learn to speak Chinese.

*This One Can Improve Your Photos

AMS Software announced the release of Home Photo Studio, a new program for photo editing, creating original greeting cards, and decorating ordinary pictures. It offers plenty of frames, tools, masks, filters, and effects (such as 3D and plastic effects). The number of effects may be confusing at first, but it offers opportunities for making every photo special. Greeting card templates can be colorful, darkish, funny, or romantic, and will help the user create a proper greeting card for any occasion. Home Photo Studio offers all necessary functions for uncomplicated photo editing.

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The most popular feature, besides greeting card templates, is probably Effects&Filters that allows adding natural phenomena (such as stars, clouds, rain, snow and lightning). You can also add noise and blur, stylize a picture (ancient photo effect, pencil drawing, lithograph, etc.), adjust brightness and saturation; and make complex combinations. The user can adjust the transparency of the effects and set the area to be processed (the top, bottom, center, borders, etc.). There are a variety of picture frames.

Home Photo Studio Deluxe edition costs a bit more than Standard Edition, but is rich with extra features. It is the right variant for those who want to create 3D compositions, get automatically created collages, use plastic effects, and import PNG/Photoshop™ templates. Deluxe edition is also remarkable for its over 100 professionally designed frames and greeting card templates.

Working with Home Photo Studio is usually trouble-free thanks to the intuitive interface. But if the user still faces a problem while mastering the program, the detailed Help system is ready to explain how to deal with it.

Features: (Some features are only in the Deluxe Edition)

- Support of more than 20 graphics formats;
- Convenient image explorer;
- Hundreds of filters, effects and masks;
- Fast photo enhancement and retouch;
- Creation of slideshows with smooth transition effects;
- Greeting card templates and picture frames;
- Automatic creation of collages and 3D compositions;
- Auto enhancement and red eye removal.

Home Photo Studio runs under Windows 2000/XP/Vista and 7. The Standard edition costs \$39.00 USD and the Deluxe edition costs \$59.00 USD. Here's a special offer for user group members. Order the Standard Edition, and then write to <support@ams-soft.com>. The message must include the order ID and the text "DealsGuy Special Offer." AMS Software will then ship the "Deluxe" Edition with 100 extra templates and extended functions. Further product information, as well as its free trial version, is available at <<http://home-photo-studio.com/>>.

Download link: <<http://home-photo-studio.com/PhotoStudio.zip>>

Company website: <<http://ams-soft.com/>>

***Some Popular Sites With Low Prices**

Some of you probably know about these, but some may not. Here are some URLs for great deals that are popular with the local user group members, and something I check frequently. One is <<http://www.1saleaday.com/>> where the sale is good for 24 hours only. The price might even be FREE with the only cost being the shipping. I've bought a few items there and some were fantastic deals while others were good, but the item wasn't quite as I expected.

Another very popular one is <<http://www.giveawayoftheday.com/>> where the item is absolutely free by download for just 24 hours. Some of these free items are reputable ones that normally have a retail price and are rated good software. When it's free, I sometimes download it even though I have no use for it at the time, but I take the attitude that "you never know." I think that men can change their minds too.

<<http://www.software-dod.com/>> is another interesting site where you might find a bargain, but I've only found one I wanted so far, and I'm not sure I really needed it.

If you find something that interests you, I suggest you read it thoroughly because I had something I thought I wanted on 1saleaday, but ended up not getting what I thought I was ordering. Read the description over thoroughly to avoid that.



Reducing exposure to stress

John R. Chait D.C. , Sarasota PC User Group

Dr. Chait is a practicing chiropractor in Sarasota and is the SPCUG ergonomic consultant. As an avid computer enthusiast, Dr. Chait knows first hand how important proper interaction between the user and their PC can be. He stresses this in his ergonomic tips column and his lectures. <drchait@hotmail.com> For more ergonomic tips, visit <<http://chaitchiropractic.com/links/Ergonomics/>>

One of the primary methods employed to reduce exposure to a hazardous work environment involves improving the workplace. The science of matching workers with their work environment is known as ergonomics. Properly defined, ergonomics is the scientific study of human work. A more practical definition states that ergonomics is "the science of matching the job to the worker and the product to the user," to everyday work situations.

For instance, if workers encounter problems with their wrists because the counter they work on is too hard, a reasonable solution is to provide a padded wrist support. Or if a worker develops a tendonitis in the elbow because the forces required to tighten a machine part are too great, the solution involves providing mechanical assistance to reduce the forces.

The two primary objectives of ergonomic intervention are to enhance performance and control fatigue. Three primary areas, physical, psychological and psychosocial, can affect both performance and fatigue. Within each of these primary areas are a number of factors including:

Workers' physical fitness - How fit are the individuals for the job they're performing?

Force - Does the job require the use of force? What type of force (static vs. dynamic)? How often is the force applied (seldom, frequently or constantly)? Is the force sustained for periods of time?

Position - Are any joints and muscles placed in non-neutral postures for prolonged periods of time?

Repetition - How frequently is a task performed?

Duty cycle - How long does it take to perform a single task? How long the recovery time before the task is repeated?

Vibration - Is the worker exposed to vibration? Are anti-vibration devices used?

Friction - Is the worker exposed to slippery surfaces?

Work practices - Is training adequate? What are the policies regarding injury reports? Light duty? Return to work?

Environment - Is the work environment adequate (temperature, lighting, ventilation)?

Job satisfaction - What is the relationship between labor and management?

Operator control - How difficult is the task to perform?

The interaction of these factors has a cumulative effect. The process of improving workplace safety involves identifying the risk factors, investigating the actual causes of injuries or the triggering events, designing intervention, strategies, implementing necessary procedures, and tracking outcomes.

Chiropractors have helped large numbers of workers by improving the worker's ability to function and interact, hopefully in a less stressful environment. Enhancing performance and controlling fatigue should be one of the most important goals of employers to help employees deal with the stresses of the daily working atmosphere



Moving From XP to Windows 7

Vinny La Bash , Sarasota PC User Group

Vinny (SPCUG President in 1996-97-98) is a retired IBM'er and teaches computer part time at the Sarasota Vocational Technical Institute. <labash@spcug.org>

Installing Windows 7 from XP is more complex than a straightforward upgrade from Vista. You need to perform a custom install, and you can do this with an Upgrade package of Windows 7. A normal upgrade won't work, but Microsoft describes the installation process as the option to "either completely replace your current operating system or install Windows on a specific drive or partition". Microsoft also allows a multi-boot system to be installed. In other words, you have the option of running both your current version of XP and Windows 7 if you want. Switching back and forth may not be the best choice as the interfaces are very different.

Completely replacing XP will not eliminate it from your system. The setup program creates a folder on your primary hard disk which it names Windows.old . The process then places all the major XP folders such as Windows, Documents and Settings, and Program file folders in the Windows.old folder. Nothing happens to your data files. You can still access them, but your applications will have to be reinstalled.

No matter which option you settle on, back up everything on your system first, especially your data files. Back up your data files at least twice and keep a copy in a separate physical location. Backing up more than one copy may seem like paranoia, but if anything goes wrong you'll be glad you did.

There are lots of ways to back up programs and data. If you use a third party program go to the manufacturer's web site and make sure the program will be modified to work with Windows 7. If you can't verify compatibility with Windows 7 or you don't use a third party backup utility, you will probably turn to XP's backup utility which Microsoft calls the Windows NT Backup-Restore Utility. Microsoft developed and released it specifically for restoring backups created in XP to restore in Windows Vista. It's pretty safe to believe that Microsoft will adapt it to work in Windows 7. If you can't verify that your third party backup utility will work in Windows 7 or you don't trust Microsoft that it will modify its special XP utility, make copies of all your important data files to CD or DVD.

Read the article called Step-by-Step: Windows 7 Upgrade and Migration on the Microsoft TechNet site. It provides some great information about a utility called Windows 7 Easy Transfer. This program lets you transfer all your data and settings from XP to Windows 7. The Windows 7 installation disks contain a copy of the program and during installation a copy will be installed on your computer. You can then use the program to copy all your data files and settings to Windows 7.

Microsoft has recognized the popularity of low cost net-books, and Windows 7 was designed to operate on systems that many people consider underpowered. You won't need terabyte sized hard disks or 6 gigabytes of RAM to run Windows 7. If your XP system was manufactured in the last four years there is a high probability that Windows 7 will run just fine. To be safe, run Microsoft's Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor on your old system before rushing out and buying Windows 7.

The Advisor does a complete check of your internal hardware, installed programs, and any externally connected devices. If there are any compatibility issues the Advisor will report it, and even make suggestions on how best to eliminate incompatibilities, and select upgrade options. Go to the Microsoft Download Center to download and install a copy of this utility to your system. It will make you much better prepared for the upgrade to Windows 7.

You won't be the only one changing to Windows 7. Don't be shy about asking questions, and please share any good information you get with other members of the PC community. A good place to start is the Getting Ready for Windows 7 section of the Microsoft Answers web site. Don't forget your local PC User Group. There is no better source for good, accurate information. Even Microsoft will acknowledge that.

Site certification

Always verify the security certificate issued to a site before submitting any personal information. Before you submit any personal information, ensure that you are indeed on the website you intend to be on. In Internet Explorer, you can do this by checking the yellow lock icon on the status bar. This symbol signifies that the website uses encryption to help protect any sensitive personal information—credit card number, Social Security number, payment details—that you enter. Secure site lock icon. If the lock is closed, then the site uses encryption. Double-click the lock icon to display the security certificate for the site. This certificate is proof of the identity for the site. When you check the certificate, the name following Issued to should match the site you think you are on. If the name differs, you may be on a spoofed site.



CAUTION

NEW TAX LAWS AHEAD

APRIL 15th IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK!

Signed By _____
Date _____

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26 years in public service

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Operating System Issue

Let's never forget the first king:

Disk Operating System

*Oh where, oh where has my little DOS gone.
Oh where, oh where can it be,
with its life cut short and windows cut long
Oh where, oh where can it be?*

Some might say that I'm losing it, but you cannot lose what you never had. Where has DOS gone? Some might say it's still around in the various forms of Linux. Others might say it's buried deep in Microsoft operating systems waiting to be called out by a powerful wizard to cast potent spells with a command prompt. But most of us just believe that it's just lost, never to found again. Like a lost pet that you once had affection for, once it's gone you seem to remember only the good times and seem to forget all the problems that it caused you.

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DOS does that to people. There are still a few of you “old-timers,” and you know who you are! Those who sit at the doughnut table at club meetings and reminisce about the “good ol’ days” when all you needed was a Northgate keyboard and a monochrome screen to have absolute power over your world. You know what I’m talking about. Way back when people spoke about computers with fear and awe. They were things better left to experts and shady government entities. The quickest way to kill a conversation in those days was to talk command line technobabble. It always made everyone in the room feel uncomfortable that they couldn’t understand you, like you were speaking a different language.

On the flip side, though, it gave you an incredible feeling of power, that you, and you alone, could master the savage beast and control your own destiny. Neh Ahh Ahh Yahh. (Sometimes I think all those comic books I read have permanently warped my thinking.) But really, didn’t you feel special? That you and you alone, could master something that would make others wince and shirk away. You didn’t have to be popular at school. You didn’t have to be good looking. You didn’t have to be wealthy. You did not have to have any of those things that everyone else needed to be important. You had knowledge.

And knowing the secrets of the PC universe, did you use that knowledge to gain wisdom or for greed? I think most of you, unfortunately, like me, used it for personal greed. We gave ourselves over to the dark side of the force and used our skill to enrich ourselves financially. But eventually as we all grew older, and some of us wiser, we started using our skills to teach and help others, which led you to me, to read these words and words of others in this tome. You all became a band of brothers forming the fellowship of the DOS.

And just! And just as your powers were at their peak, everything came crashing down like the Jedi of old. A new power rose in the universe to supplant the old ways. Windows came rushing down like a wind from heaven with trumpets blazing and fire and smoke billowing up in great clouds. And when this behemoth came to rest, its great weight crushed the last vestiges of DOS underneath its feet.

A new group came forth to rule the PC world. A group of men, and, yes, women, too, who knew nothing of the old ways but were formed from clay in the new ways. These new acolytes grew up in the ways of the PC, each having their own since they were young.

Gone was command prompt. In was the mouse. The wizards of old became legend. And after time they have become forgotten to be remembered by only a few at computer club meetings. There are still a few prophets preaching to us not to forget the old ways. I saw one at last month’s meeting giving a history lesson at the club meeting. But they are old and feeble now with most of their words echoing on deaf ears.

So I say to all today! Remember the DOS! Don’t let the old ways die, as you never know when you will be called upon as I have this week to use my skills again. Fortunately, I have not been found wanting as I was able to vanquish the beast with my skill at the command prompt. I have beaten down one enemy, but more are waiting to attack.

So be on your guard, be ready, and be faithful to the cause. Put away your mice as they are no use against such foes. Operate you PC only with the keyboard and keep yourself ready for the fight. For it shall come. It shall come.





Windows 7 is Here!

Written by Robert Nisbet, a member of the Asbury Computer Club, MD, www.amvresidents.org/computerclub, halmarilyn@hotmail.com

Q: What is Windows 7?

A: Windows 7 is the next generation of operating system for PCs from Microsoft. It will replace Windows Vista – and Windows XP as it is phased out.

Q: Is Windows 7 the official name?

A: Yes. Microsoft considers this version the seventh version of Windows and has dropped the “fancy” (i.e. XP, Vista) names for now.

Q: Is Windows 7 a major change from Windows Vista?

A: Not relative to what you see, though there are some nice new user features which are addressed in future installments. Many improvements are “under the hood.” Some pundits have characterized Windows 7 as “Windows Vista the way it should have been.”

Q: I have a Windows Vista computer. Can I upgrade to Windows 7?

A: Yes. The upgrade will be easy and preserve all your files and settings. All your hardware that works with Windows Vista will work with Windows 7.

Q: I have a Windows XP computer. Can I upgrade to Windows 7.

A: Possibly, but... This is not so easy. You first have to make sure your computer will run Windows 7. Then, you have to decide if it is worth it. You will have to save all your data files and then reformat your hard drive and start all over with the Windows 7 installation.

Getting Windows 7

There will be both upgrade and full editions of Windows 7. The version that will be available for U.S. use is Windows 7 Home Premium. There will be no “Basic” version of Windows 7 as there was for Vista. The upgrade version will cost about \$120 and the full version will cost about \$200. Most people will be obtaining the upgrade version, if bought in a store. If you buy a new computer between now and October 22, you receive a voucher from the manufacturer for a free upgrade to Windows 7 when it is available. You will have to install the upgrade yourself or obtain assistance. If you buy a new computer after October 22, your new computer will come with Windows 7 Home Premium already installed. It pays to wait if you can.

Upgrading from Windows Vista

If you are a Windows Vista user now and are contemplating upgrading to Windows 7 (I do recommend it), you should download and run the Microsoft Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor (Beta) utility. It will tell you if your computer hardware meets the minimum requirements for running Windows 7 and will identify anything that needs to be uninstalled or upgraded before the upgrade. It is available for download at Web address: tinyurl.com/mnmj8u. The Advisor is simple to use and will give you a printed report. Be aware you must have a DVD drive on your computer and not just a CD drive to install the upgrade. Windows 7 only comes on DVD discs.

Upgrading from Windows XP

If you are a Windows XP user, you must now have a “high-end” computer to meet the minimum hardware requirements for Windows 7. If you bought an “inexpensive” XP computer originally, forget about upgrading. If you do upgrade you will have to do a “clean” installation where all your existing files are erased before installation. You will need to back-up all your data files prior to starting and reinstall all your applications afterward. All your peripherals (printer, scanner, etc.) will require new “driver” software, if they are not too old. The Windows 7 disc comes with many drivers on it. Usually, a new computer is by far the best route for XP users.

Will I have trouble learning to use Windows 7?

If you are a Vista user now, you should catch on to Windows 7 easily. They look very similar. There are some new features, which I will start covering in the next article. If you are a Windows XP user and buy a new Windows 7 computer, you will notice some differences on the Start menu and when you view and work in folder windows. However, Windows is still Windows and most things work essentially the same.

Caveat for upgrading from Vista

Something I forgot to address in the last issue is for Vista users upgrading to Windows 7. In your upgrade box you will find two DVDs. One is for 32 bit Windows and one is for 64 bit Windows. Choose the 32 bit disc for your upgrade. Don't worry about the difference for basic computing. Now, one of the two choices you have when you start the upgrade disc is the option called Upgrade. This is called an “in place” upgrade where the new operating system replaces the old operating system, but (hopefully) leaves everything else in place – your data files, settings, etc. NEVER, ever, ever start this process without first backing up all your data files to an external medium. Nine hundred ninety eight times out of a thousand everything will go fine, but you don't want to end up among those few where it does not and lose all your data. The Windows 7 DVD contains a Windows Easy Transfer Wizard tool that will backup all your files and settings for you and put them back on the Windows 7 computer. If you are not computer savvy, you may need technical assistance to accomplish all this. Just to reiterate for XP users, Windows 7 ONLY comes on DVD, so if your XP computer only has a CD drive, forget about investing in the upgrade.

What's New in Windows 7?

There is no way in a few short paragraphs to describe in-depth all the new or improved features in Windows 7. For these articles I will just give you a basic overview of several of the most obvious so you better know what to expect when you see your own desktop and start using your new (or upgraded) computer.

While Windows 7 initially looks and acts a lot like Windows Vista from the user standpoint, there are a number of new and improved features designed to make using the computer easier and to improve productivity. I will cover some in this article and more in the next edition. Some are things you will not use every day, but it is good to know they exist – and understanding them will help you use Windows 7 more effectively.

Windows Aero

Aero is the “glassy” transparent look of windows that was introduced in Windows Vista. Things look even glassier in Windows 7. The idea is to deemphasize the windows itself and bring the focus onto the contents of the windows. The Aero effect also is seen on the taskbar and in several neat window management features carry the Aero label.

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Windows 7 Taskbar

One of the first things you notice on the Windows 7 desktop is that the taskbar along the bottom of the screen still is there, but looks different. The icons on it are bigger and there are three icons already on it. Normally, the taskbar has only displayed icons for applications, folders, and files you had “opened.” Also, just to the right of the Start button (or orb) there was a small area with a few icons on it. This was called the “Quick Launch Toolbar.” Now, those two areas have been more or less combined. You can have both “shortcuts” to frequently used things on the taskbar (which you can “pin” there) as well as having it reflect the things you have opened. How do you tell one from the other? It can be confusing at first until you note that the “open” items each have a “glassy” box around them whereas the shortcuts do not.

You also notice a new button on the far right end of the toolbar. This is the Aero Peek button. Say you have several open windows covering the desktop and want to see your analog clock or weather bug gadget (described below) on the desktop. Just rest your mouse cursor on the Aero Peek button and the open windows become transparent allowing you to see the desktop. Move away and the windows return. Not the greatest advancement since sliced bread, but pretty neat nonetheless.

You also notice that if you open multiple files using the same application – say, Microsoft Word – there is only one Word icon on the taskbar, not one for each document. Hover your mouse over the Word button and you see live thumbnails of each document over the button, similar to what you see in Windows Vista. However, move the cursor up to one of the thumbnails and a full screen live preview appears. Once you find the file you want to work on, click that thumbnail and the document is on the screen.

Desktop Gadgets

What are gadgets anyway? They are handy little utilities that do something (hopefully) useful for you. There are analog clocks, weather bugs, slide shows, stock monitors, and literally hundreds of others to choose from in all types of categories. Gadgets were introduced in Windows Vista and resided in a reserved area along the right side of the screen called the Sidebar. Users complained that the sidebar ate up too much screen, so in Windows 7 gadgets have been moved to the desktop. You can place them anywhere you want or not have any at all. It’s up to you. Since they are on the desktop, they often are hidden behind windows, hence Aero Peek described above.



Libraries

I am going to end this edition with another significant change in Windows 7. That is the introduction of the library concept for file management. You will see them, but may never fully use them. Still you need to understand what they are. Since the earliest days of Windows, we have had folders to keep our files in – the Documents folder being a prime example. All these folders resided on our computer. Well, the concept of personal computing has drastically changed over the last few years. Many homes have networks of several computers; some homes have home servers – essentially a basic computer with a huge hard drive to store files you want on it. In business, the file a person may need to use daily could be located on a far distant computer.

This is where libraries come in. Not to get too technical, but libraries do not exist physically. They are just a way to aggregate the folders and files you use and need to access in one handy place. You still have a Documents link on your Start menu just as you did in Vista. Now when you open it you see “Document Library” and the folders and files you have created. You also still have a default folder on your computer where Windows can store the things you create. This is called “My Documents.” (Sound familiar? Déjà vu all over again.) However, you also can “store” – and access in your Documents library – files which exist on another computer on your home network or even in another location over a network or the Web.

Many of you may never find the need to take full advantage of the library concept. However, it is a significant step forward in file access and management that does not tie the user to just one computer any more. Good job Microsoft, for a change.

Microsoft Windows Vista Unleashed

by **Jim Krill**, a member of the North Orange County Computer Club, CA, www.noccc.org, editor@noccc.org

Search Amazon and you will discover that there are probably hundreds of books about Windows Vista. Which one is best for you? That one question is impossible to answer. One solution is to get a good reference manual that covers all areas of Windows Vista. These large reference manuals can be intimidating to the average user. (For this review I will call the average user a lay user.) Windows Vista Unleashed is one such large, 750 page, reference book. For years I've used and recommended the Missing Manual series of books. They're good but often they were missing the information I needed or they didn't go far enough. Windows Vista Unleashed may be too much for you but is it better to have too much information or not enough information? With five different versions of Windows Vista, there is a lot to cover and Windows Vista Unleashed is a book that tries to cover it all.

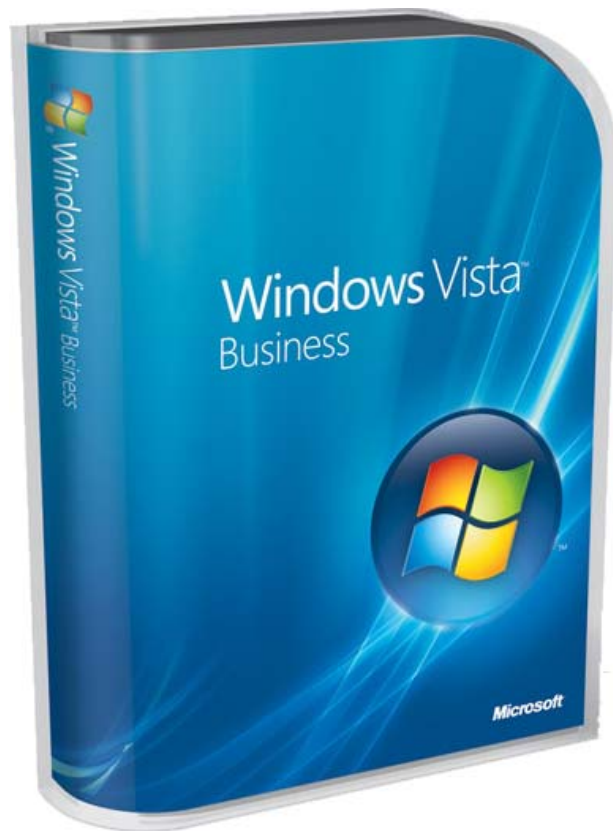
How many versions of Windows Vista are there? There are five versions. And Windows Vista Unleashed makes the attempt to cover all versions of Windows Vista. Not an easy task. And how does any one person know if this book is for him or her? You may be a network specialist. You may do customizations of the OS. Or, you're just a software techie who has to know how to keep individual Windows Vista machines running. Windows Vista Unleashed wants to be that reference for all types of users except one. The one exception is the lay user. After using this book I think even the lay user will benefit.

Because there are five versions of Windows Vista, it's nice to know which version is being discussed in the book. Windows Vista Unleashed uses a graphic logo to indicate which version of Windows Vista applies to a subject. Since this reviewer uses the Home Basic (Cheap) it's nice to know that I don't have to waste my time reading up on a utility that isn't in my version of Windows Vista and it also helps to know what IS in any version of Windows Vista. It can get confusing even for the professionals. If no graphic logo appears, then ALL versions of Windows Vista apply. This small help aid was much appreciated by this reviewer. It's the simple ideas that make a big difference.

Does this book meet its lofty goal? Good question. I have been using one form or another of Windows since Windows version one and I'm not sure I'm qualified to answer that question. Then again, can a business owner know the answer, or the road warrior, or any of the above users know if this book will work for all the other users? The answer is probably yes. This is one book that most users should have. It appears to be a good primary book for Windows Vista. It may not give the deep level answers but it does provide a good overall view of Window Vista.

First, it gives excellent overview of Windows Vista. The first 300 pages is the manual you didn't get with your Windows Vista machine. Because it goes into the basics, it's a book that even the lay user should have. Yes, you may not need to know how to write Windows Scripts but you will need to know how to recover from problems and you should know how to set up and maintain a small network no matter your lever of knowledge.

All users need to understand the language used by the specialists in order to communicate with them and they with you. Most prob-



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lems you encounter will probably involve being able to tell the specialist what is wrong in a way that will help them fix the problem. I don't know how many times I've had to talk to someone with a Windows problem who had no idea what I'm asking. Because Windows Vista Unleashed covers all levels of the OS, it will enable the everyday user to understand the language of the specialist. If you don't know what the specialist is asking you should be able to get the definition from this book.

This reviewer uses a laptop for everything and there is some useful information for laptop users that you don't find in most books. I thought I knew everything I needed to know about power management but I was wrong. I, for one, didn't know you could configure the power buttons. Very useful. I actually played with the power options as I was reading the book. In the Control Panel, there is one entire section for the Mobile PC Control Panel. If you have tried to use the tools in Windows Vista, like I have, then here is a book for you.

One feature of the book that I really did like was how it treated a subject as if you needed to know how to use it. It gives step-by-step instructions. I usually would get more confused than I was BEFORE I started reading a subject in other books but not Windows Vista Unleashed. Going to the chapter on networking, Windows Vista Unleashed gives step-by-step instructions on using the network tools in Windows Vista. I would have liked to test this method with the chapter on networking but I did see its usefulness when reading the chapter on the Mobile PC Control Panel.

I do recommend this book for any user of Windows Vista. You may be a Home Premium user and have no use for knowing about other versions of Vista. All versions of Windows Vista have more in common than their names imply. Forget you're a Home Premium user and just remember you are a Windows Vista user. Even though this reviewer uses the Home Basic (I did say I was cheap.) Windows Vista Unleashed is still an excellent reference and HELP manual.

One idea I have tried to put forward was that a business or IT center should select one book that ALL users should have and use that book as a support tool. Windows Vista Unleashed qualifies as one possible selection. I do recommend IT centers purchase the book and try it out on their lay users.

Microsoft Window Vista Unleashed, Second edit ion, by Paul McFedries . Published by SAMS, 800 East 96th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46240.



Finding Help In Windows & Windows Programs

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Windows and Windows programs actually have a tremendous amount of help and assistance built into the software. Unfortunately, most users don't know where to look, or don't know how access this help. A good analogy would be a man who drowned, even though six people threw him life jackets. You may ask "Why did he drown if he had all those life jackets?" The unfortunate fact is that he didn't know what a life jacket was, or how to use it.

How often have you needed help in a Windows programs and didn't know where to look? It just so happens that Windows has lots of places that provides you with help. In the distant past, most software programs came with lots of books, manuals and other printed material. However, in those days, the cost of the software was much higher and could easily absorb the cost of these manuals. In present times, the software industry has gotten extremely competitive, and cannot afford to print elaborate manuals and include them with the product. But, a tremendous amount of help is readily available to you, if you know where to look.

Actually, the subject of help should actually be broken up into two distinct categories. There is the type of help you need when you're working in a program and something specific comes up that you are not familiar with, and need assistance. The other type of help is when you need real beginners information on how to learn and use the basic program features.

GETTING HELP WHILE WORKING IN A PROGRAM

Listed below are 3 methods for obtaining help and information instantly.

1. The universal key in Windows to obtain help is F1. In almost any situation, whether it is in a specific program or just on the plain Windows desktop, using this key will generally bring up a help screen in which you can navigate and probably get answers to the question at hand.
2. The second most important way to get help is to use the help menu on the program in which you are working. While not every window program has a menu at the top of its operating window, the majority of Windows programs do have this listing. Clicking on "HELP" will generally bring up a list of various options. A very common option is an item which is labeled "index." Clicking on this will bring up a bunch of choices for you to select alphabetically or by topic. You can click the help area you are looking for, or generally type in the subject in the field which is presented, to have the program show you what is offered.
3. A third, and largely overlooked methods of obtaining information, is by right-clicking on the item in question. The protocol of right-clicking to obtain information and other features is becoming more and more widespread in Windows and Windows programs.

The three methods presented above can provide you with a tremendous amount of assistance while working at your computer. While these methods do not replace the need to use manuals, they offer the user the opportunity to obtain help very rapidly via a few simple mouse clicks. The best way to learn more about this, and understand the protocols, is just to try it. So, start clicking away and see what comes up.

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PRINTED DOCUMENTATION

Typically, programs come with a very short printed document which includes just about enough information to help you install the program. Today, most installation disks are CD's (or DVD's), and of course, optical disks have lots of space where other material in addition to the program itself can be stored. Sometimes, the complete manual for the program is on the CD and the installation process for the software actually sets up an icon where you can click and have the manual brought up. Some manufacturers however, just put the manual on the CD and never let you know that it's there. Of course, if you're conversant with exploring the contents of the CD by using Windows Explorer or another file manager, you can take a quick look at the listing of files and generally locating the manual is fairly easy.

Once you have the manual located, it will more than likely be in a PDF file, and you can read it on your machine, or print it out using your printer if you so desire. If you feel that you are going to have many reasons to continually use the manual, it probably pays to print it out.

One thing you should be aware of however is that manuals can often be several hundred pages, and can take a considerable amount of time, paper, and ink to print out. Also, the cost of printing the manual can be substantial if there is lots of color used on the pages. Printing out of a manual can run anywhere from five cents to 20 cents a page, using your own printer, depending upon the complexity and use of color on the pages. Very often, for major programs where there are third party books available, it makes more sense to purchase a ready-made 3rd party manual which will probably have even more information than the manual on disk. This is true mostly of those programs which are very widely used such as Microsoft Word, Corel WordPerfect, Photoshop, and similar programs.

Generally, when the manual is on the program's CD, it is often in a format called PDF, which stands for "portable document format." This format requires Adobe Acrobat reader to view it on your computer. Most computers these days have Adobe Acrobat reader already installed, as it is a very widely used program. And, if you double-click on a file that has a PDF extension, it will automatically launch Acrobat Reader and the document in question will be available for you to read, print, or whatever you would like to do. Adobe Acrobat reader is part of the Adobe program called "Acrobat". This program has become universally used for creating documents which can be distributed widely, and easily read on any computer. The reader portion of the program has been made available by Adobe as a free utility.

THIRD PARTY MANUALS

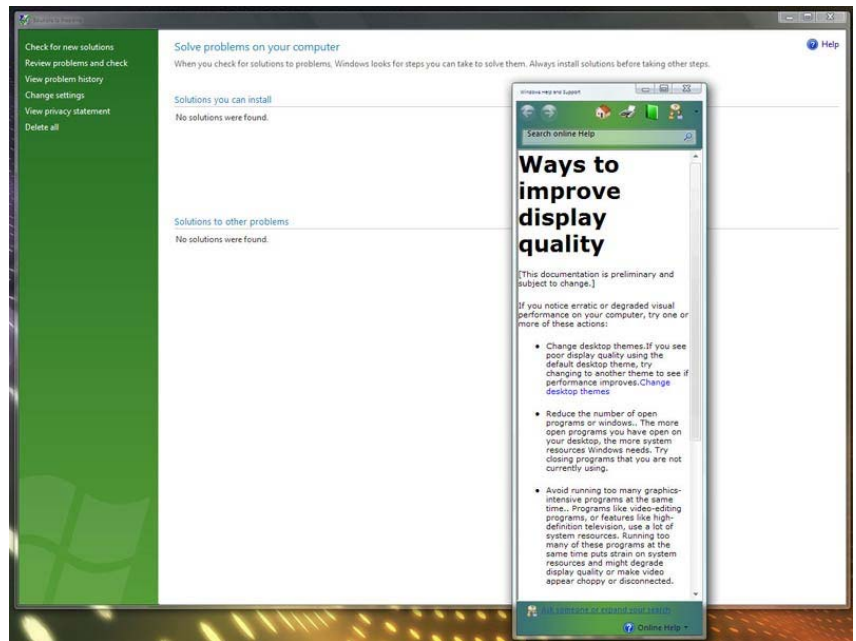
If you decide to buy a manual, here again, you have a variety of choices. Very often the software manufacturer has manuals available which you can purchase directly there. Unfortunately, these manuals may not be as good as those which you can purchase directly from a book supplier. A typical case in point is the manual for WordPerfect. For many years, I have been using the original WordPerfect manuals in addition to the third party manuals produced by QUE Corp... These QUE WordPerfect manuals which are typically entitled "Special Edition - using Corel WordPerfect X", have been vastly

superior to those manuals which are available directly from Corel, or whatever company currently owned the WordPerfect product. The QUE manuals for WordPerfect are generally are over 1000 pages, very well-organized, and offer extremely good value. Anytime I'm looking for a manual for any program, QUE is my first choice.

With the Internet, and book stores like Barnes & Noble or Amazon, finding books has become a very simple task. Go to the Web site, and do a search on the program name in question. A listing will come up, with info on the book, pricing, etc... Then it's a simple matter to make one's choice. While a local book seller may be able to provide you with some of the choices, the Internet will have a far greater number of choices available.

I hope the material presented here will assist you in using your computer in more and better ways. To me, the secret to getting any job done was never that one had to know everything about everything associated with the task. But, knowing where to look for answers to the things that you aren't familiar with, is the real key to success.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site www.brcs.org. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a loose-leaf notebook for future reference.

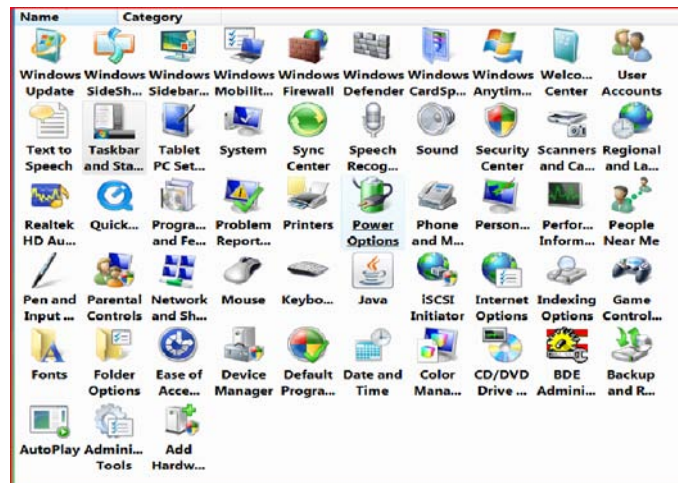


Windows Control Panel Basics

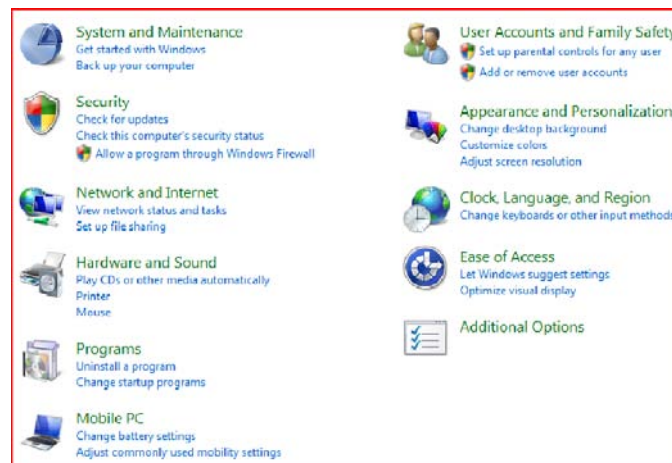
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The Windows Control Panel is the component of the Windows User Interface that allows users to modify and personalize the way Windows (XP and Vista) to operate. All of the User Interface Settings and controls that are under user control can be manipulated by the small applications (called applets) that are part of the Windows Control Panel. (Control Panel applet files have .cpl as the file extension, so if you come across a file that has a .cpl suffix, don't move or delete it, it's probably a control panel applet.) For the names of each of the Control Panel applets, visit the Microsoft site at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/313808>. In XP, Vista (and probably Windows 7), the Windows Control Panel has two views, the "Classic View," and the "Category View." For convenience, the user can switch between these two views.

- The Classic view consists of shortcuts directly to the various Control Panel applets. Each applet does a specific job.

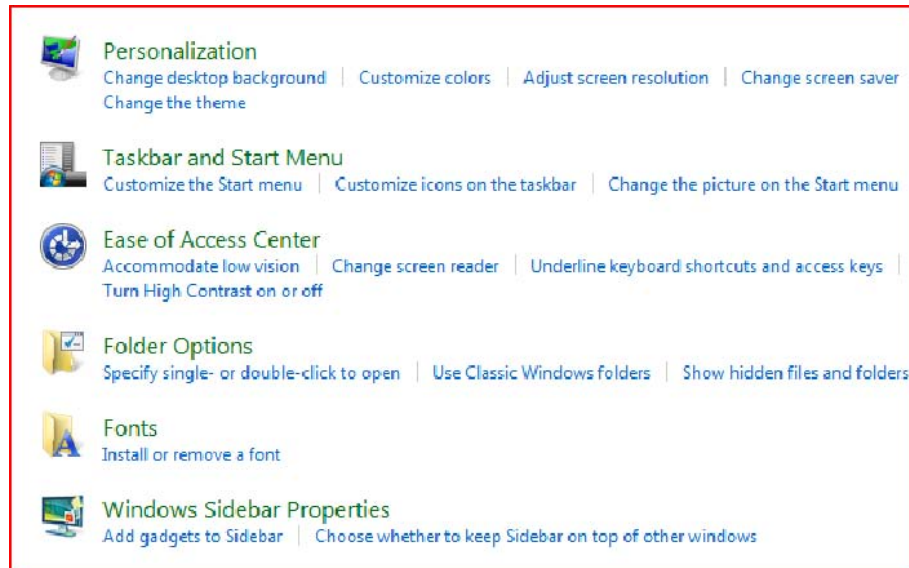


- The Category view consists of categories which, when clicked, display the Control Panel applets related to that category. The Category View divides the Control Panel applets into logical categories:



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After you choose a category, you may be taken directly to the appropriate applet, or you may be given a list of tasks that can be accomplished, such as the following for the Appearance and Personalization category:



If you are offered a list of tasks, choose a task and you will be taken directly into the correct screen and tab of the applet that will do the job. If you are familiar with the applets and you know just what you want to accomplish, the Classic view is probably the view to use. If you aren't quite sure what the applet does, then the Category view may be the best choice. Either way, the idea is to get into the applet that controls the function that you want to modify or personalize. Once you are in the desired applet, you will have available all the screens, tabs and buttons that the User Interface provides.

Each Control Panel applet focuses on a specific functional area. Some applets control the way the User Interface looks such as "Display" and "Keyboard," some control the way the User Interface acts such as "Automatic Updates" and "Folder Options," and some control specific functional areas such as "Network Connections," and "Sounds and Audio Devices." Many applets control both the looks and actions in a specific functional area. For example, the Mouse applet controls the way the mouse cursor looks, and it also controls the way it acts when the mouse is clicked or double-clicked. On the other hand, Network Connections is used to set up a network and, once setup, you hardly know it is doing its job (but you'll very quickly know when it's not doing its job).

As an example of a Control Panel applet, let's look at "Folder Options." Understanding this applet is very helpful in explaining how certain things in Windows operate. (The following discussion applies directly to Windows XP. Vista is similar, but with small differences and instead of finding "File Types" in the "Folder Options" applet, it is found in the "Default Programs" applet.) In XP, when you double-click on the "Folder Options" applet, you are presented with a window with four tabs at the top. The first three tabs determine some very basic operations of the Operating System. The "General" tab has three controls: one for Tasks, one for rose Folders and the third for the action that opens windows. A recommended setting for Tasks is "Show common tasks in folders." A recommended setting for Browse Folders is "Open each folder in its own windows." And the recommendation for "Click items as follows:" is "Double-click to open an item (single-click to select)." Using this last recommendation will force items to be selected with one click and opened (or acted upon with a double-click). "The other item "Single-click to open an item (point to select)" will usually confuse a user, especially a new user.) The View tab presents a list of "Advanced settings" for "Files and Folders." Each of these is selected by checking the check box next to the setting description. For general use, a recommendation would be to check the first six settings, and then check "Remember these folder's view settings," and finally check the last four settings. Also, choose the "Show hidden files and folders" and "Show and manage the pair as a single file" radio buttons.

Finally, the "File Types" tab controls the association for files types used on this particular computer. (Some common File Types are .doc, .jpg, .mp3, .xls, .wmv, .avi.) When you select this tab, Windows will create a list of File Types, in alphabetical order, with their associated programs, that are used on this specific computer. The association is shown in the "Details for '.xyz' extensions" (extension is used interchangeably with file type). This association list determines which program on this computer will be used to open, display and work with a specific file type. The "Opens with" item shows the program that will be used. (For example, .jpg may be associated with Windows Picture and Fax Viewer, or Adobe Photoshop Elements, or Paint, depending on which program or person last set up the associations.) The "Change" button next to the associated program name provides an opportunity to change the association. Pressing the "Change" button will produce a list of programs that could possibly be used in association with this file type. The list starts with "Recommended Programs," and "Other Programs" are also listed. If you want to change the association, only choose one of the Recommended programs. These programs are known to work with these unexpected and possibly harmful results. Click on the Recommended program of your choice, and the association will be changed to your new selection. Press "Apply." When you are finished making any additional association changes, press "OK."

Knowledge of the "Folders Options" Control Panel applet is very helpful in explaining how and why certain actions are taken by Windows and Application programs on your computer. Other Control Program applets are equally important and will be discussed in future Monitor articles.



Fun & Games with Ubuntu

by **Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.**, Regular Columnist
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This article is about my experience getting Ubuntu up and running on my new Asus laptop. I had been running version 8.04 (Hardy Heron) on my old laptop. Since it seemed to be quite successful I decided to use it for the initial install on my new computer. Perhaps I should point out that Canonical, producers of Ubuntu, turn out a new version of their OS every six months! Compare that with Microsoft and its multi-year production cycle. Hardy Heron is a long-term support version with guaranteed support until April 2011. That's three years from its original release date. In the meantime, version 8.10 (Intrepid Ibex) was released in October 2008 and will be supported for two years. However, the latest version is 9.04 (Jaunty Jackalope) which was released on April 23, 2009. Since I was starting my installation the end of March, I decided that installing Hardy Heron should be fine. A bad guess, as it turned out.

The process of installing any Ubuntu version is very similar to installing Windows. The exception being when you want it to share the hard drive as a dual boot system with Windows. Then a few extra steps are needed. The first step is to download Ubuntu. This will be an ISO image file. That is a compressed file in the format specified by the International Organization of Standardization. It is almost 700 megabytes in size, so it's best to have a broadband connection for your download. (If you don't have a broadband connection, you can request a free CD from Canonical and have it mailed to you.) Once the file is on your hard drive it has to be decompressed and the image burned to a CD. Most commercial software can burn the ISO file image to a CD. I used CDBurnerXP, a free Windows program, to burn the image to the CD. That gave me a bootable CD that either runs Ubuntu from the CD or it can install the OS to a hard drive as a dual boot with Windows/Vista or it can take over an entire drive. If you have two hard drives in your computer you could have Ubuntu take over the second drive and dual boot with Windows. There is also an option to install it as Windows software allowing you to run it within Windows or Vista. I haven't tried this option. It just seems to me that running Ubuntu under Windows you would lose many of the benefits of Ubuntu, especially its stability.

The hard drive on my laptop was already partitioned into C and D drives and formatted with NTFS. (That's the file system XP and Vista use.) My intention was to install Ubuntu on the second partition as a dual boot system. As I found out, if your hard drive is not already partitioned, don't change it. Let the Ubuntu installation do it for you. That is much easier. I ended up doing a more manual preparation of the hard drive which requires a better understanding of how Linux systems need to be set up. You can find the info on the Ubuntu site, but why make things any harder than you have to! Once the drive was set, Ubuntu spent some time installing all the files needed for my hardware and the additional software. If you are interested in the details of installing Ubuntu, check out this web site: <https://help.ubuntu.com/community/GraphicalInstall>. They have a detailed graphical presentation (screen shots) of the steps involved.

During the installation Ubuntu asks for a user name and a password. I used my initials and a fairly secure password. I recommend that you do not shirk this password setup. It will help to protect your computer from problems caused by outside entry of worms or trojans through the Internet connection. The password has to be entered for software installation or any other administrative function. So using a strong password is advisable.

Now I was ready to do my part of the setup. I had to program my new USB modem so I could connect to the Internet. That requires some knowledge of the command line functions in Terminal. I had done this on my previous computer but some of the information for the new modem was different, so I had to find that first. It took a little hunting, but everything worked once I had the commands right. The other thing I had noticed was that the sound didn't seem to be working and the video resolution was not right. So I investigated both of these through the Ubuntu forums. That turned out to be far more difficult than I imagined it would be. My laptop has an NVidia graphics card. It turned out Hardy Heron did not have the drivers for my card,

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it was too new. The drivers available on the NVidia web site also didn't seem to help. My sound card was part of the Intel chip and the drivers just didn't seem to want to work with it no matter what I did. Then I also found that Hardy Heron didn't recognize my eSATA port. After doing more research in the Ubuntu Community forum, it seemed like I needed to try the Intrepid Ibex upgrade or maybe I would have to wait for Jaunty Jackalope to solve my problems.

So, next I downloaded the ISO file for Intrepid Ibex and burned it to a CD. That gave me a bootable CD that I could use to test how well this version would work with my laptop. When I booted from the CD, although it took some time to load, the video setup was perfect. It recognized my NVidia card and gave me the 1200x800 resolution that I had with Vista. It also had the expected 3D effects and other graphics features that my card supports. Next I tried the sound and had no problem playing some WAV files I had stored in the Linux partition. Better and better. With previous live CDs I had never been able to connect to the Internet with my old wireless modem. But I clicked on the wireless icon on the top bar of the window and it gave me a list of several local wireless networks and it also had a choice of a wireless broadband connection. So I tried the broadband connection and within seconds I was connected through my Verizon wireless modem to the Internet. This live CD also recognized my printer, but didn't have the drivers to print to it. However, everything was working much better with Intrepid Ibex than it had with Hardy Heron. So, I decided my next step was to upgrade to Intrepid Ibex.

If I had done an install from the live CD, it would have wiped out many of my files that had been created using Hardy Heron. It wouldn't affect my documents as they were backed up to my external drive. However, there were other files that I had created to help with hardware compatibility and additional software I had downloaded that would have disappeared. So I went back to the Ubuntu site to find out how to upgrade, rather than install Intrepid Ibex from the CD. It turned out to be much easier than I had anticipated. In the System-Administration menu there is a selection for "Software Sources". This contains the information on locations where the Synaptic Package Manager will find additional software. On the Update tab you will find the options for operating system updates. Mine had been set for "long term support" updates only. I changed that to "standard updates", clicked OK and exited the window. The package manager told me that there was an update available, version 8.10, and it could be downloaded. It also gave me an estimate of the amount of time it would take with my connection. The estimate was two hours, but it ended up taking 30 minutes less. Once the download was complete, the upgrade installation started. About an hour later, the screen announced that the system needed to be rebooted. Since I still have the live CD for Intrepid Ibex, I automatically have a backup CD, should problems occur down the road.

After the upgrade, the first thing I noticed was that the dual-boot menu reflected the new version of Ubuntu. Next, it took far less time for the user name/password request to show up. Then, very quickly, on the desktop there was the Intrepid Ibex. I will be replacing the Ibex graphic with my own wallpaper, another very easy task. But, I had noted there was no sound. So I clicked on the sound icon and found that the sound had been muted! Once I corrected that, it worked perfectly. First problem solved! Then I clicked on the wireless icon and there was the broadband choice. I selected it and within seconds I was on the Internet. Second problem solved. However, the screen resolution didn't seem right. With some hunting I found an NVIDIA X Server settings on the System – Administration menu. That allowed me to change the resolution to 1200x800. Third problem solved.

Next, I realized I hadn't tried to use the eSATA port when I was running the live CD, so now was the time to try that out. I plugged in my external drive and all three partitions appeared in the Places menu. I clicked on the main partition and all the files come up in the file manager (nautilus) window. So, everything that I had problems with under Hardy Heron seemed to be working with Intrepid Ibex. And, the improvement came without having to do anything with the Ubuntu command line. In my mind, that makes Ubuntu much more ready for the average user. With an easy install, either single or dual boot, a great selection of software that is easily available through a graphics interface, it is becoming something that anyone can try and, probably, enjoy using. As for crashes, in more than 10 years of using various flavors of Linux, I have yet to have one crash. I certainly can't say that for Windows over the same period of time.

My next step will be to download a live CD of the latest version, Jaunty Jackalope, after the initial surge of business slows down. I really don't want to be trying to download almost 700 MB of data at a time when thousands of other Ubuntu enthusiasts are trying to do the same thing. By trying out the live CD version I can be sure that it will work with my hardware before doing an upgrade. I have already seen the problems that occur when you have to remove a newer version and revert back to a previous version. That is something I really don't want to do again. Windows has similar problems as those who replaced Vista with XP found out. I am also considering downloading the 64 bit version of Ubuntu. I am very curious as to how it would work with my hardware. You may be sure I will share the results with you.

So for all of you Windows/Vista users who are curious about Ubuntu, the easiest way to test it on your hardware is to download a live CD. From the home page, www.ubuntu.com, you can download either the latest version, or an earlier version. I would recommend that you not go back any further than version 8.10, Intrepid Ibex. You really should give it a try and download the CD, especially if you have a broadband connection. You'll also find the Ubuntu has a large selection of games that come with the installation. So, have some fun and games with Ubuntu!

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Ubuntu 64-bit Operating System

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I was interested in installing a 64-bit operating system (OS) on my laptop. Since I have a relatively new system that is 64-bit capable, it seemed to be time to try it out. I had downloaded the .iso file for the latest version of Ubuntu, version 9.04 or “Jaunty Jackalope”. This is the latest regular release. Another one is due in Canonical's six month release cycle about the time this article is published. The next long-term release is due in the spring of 2010. For more information on the Ubuntu release cycle see <http://www.ubuntu.com/products/ubuntu/release-cycle>.

I used the Brasero Disk Burner software that was provided with Ubuntu version 8.10 to burn the .iso file to disk. Burning the .iso file produced a bootable “Live” CD that could be used for the installation. I already had two operating systems on my computer and I wanted to add the 64-bit OS as the third rather than remove one. The hard drive had Vista in one 160 GB partition and the 32-bit Ubuntu in another 160 MB partition. I thought I would be able to divide that latter partition to use half for the 32-bit and half for the 64-bit version of Ubuntu. At least that was the plan.

I booted the computer using the installation CD. With a Live CD, the first menu allows you to run Ubuntu directly from the CD, install Ubuntu, do a check on the CD or boot from the hard drive instead. To do a few checks of the compatibility of the 64-bit system with my hardware, I ran Ubuntu from the CD. Everything seemed to work properly, except for the printer. That I had expected as the Brother printer I use requires drivers to be downloaded from the Brother web site. At this point everything was looking good, so I clicked on the Install Icon on the desktop.

After a short delay as the software loaded, I was greeted with the opening screen to select the language. English was highlighted, so I just clicked on “Continue”. The next screen was to select the keyboard and US was highlighted. Again, just click on “Continue”. Next came the screen for the time zone. Since I was doing this in the Central Time Zone, I clicked in that area and Chicago came up as the location. Next click on “Continue” again.

Now I got down to the real business of the installation. The software loaded the drive partitioner. The current partitions were identified as Windows Vista, Ubuntu 8.10 and the Linux swap partition. There were two different bars showing the current partitions in different colors. My choices here were (1) use the entire drive for Ubuntu 9.04; (2) install 9.04 side by side with the current OS's; or (3) do a custom partition. On selecting the second option and clicking on the Ubuntu partition, there was a slider that I could use to alter the size of the current Ubuntu partition on the second bar. So I used that to reduce the 8.1 partition and the software then added the 9.04 partition to the graphic. Once I was satisfied with the size of the new partition, I again clicked on “Continue”. After a few seconds an error message popped up telling me that the process had failed. Oh well, back to the beginning. After trying the process twice, I canceled the installation and restarted the computer with Ubuntu 8.10.

I suspected the partitioning problem was caused by one of two possibilities. One that the partition I was working with was 32 bit and I wanted to install a 64 bit OS which didn't fit the disk formatting. Or two, all the partitions were on the boot drive and so were locked. I needed to try a different tactic. Next, I downloaded an .iso file for the graphic version of Gparted. This is a free partitioning program that works with many different file systems. It can also resize and move partitions without loss of data. Since I had already backed up my Ubuntu 8.10 to an external hard drive, I felt it was safe to use Gparted to create an empty partition on the drive. After booting from this CD, Gparted identified all the partitions in use on the drive. I highlighted the Ubuntu 8.10 partition and clicked on Move/Resize. After entering the new size for the partition, I clicked on Apply. It took about 10 minutes to complete the process. This left an unallocated partition of about 75 GB. Next I exited Gparted, removed the CD, replaced it with the Ubuntu install CD and restarted the system.

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After getting back to the partitioning section of the install, it offered me an additional choice to install Ubuntu 9.04 in the largest unallocated partition. That was exactly what I wanted. Selecting that and clicking on Continue allowed the installation to go forward. In about 25 minutes the installation was complete. After the computer was rebooted, I logged into Vista just to be certain it was working. Then I exited and booted into Ubuntu 9.04.

My first impressions of this 64-bit version of Ubuntu are very positive. It loads from the boot menu in about 10-15 seconds. This is noticeably faster than the earlier 32-bit version. It also makes Vista look like a snail. Turning off the computer results in complete shutdown in less than 10 seconds. Try to get Vista to do that!

Ubuntu comes with most of the software that I use on a regular basis: OpenOffice 3.0, Firefox 3.0, Gimp (Photoshop equivalent), XSane (scanning software), Brasero Disc Burner, and Tomboy notes. There are four other packages that I downloaded using the Add/Remove function on the Applications menu. These are: Jpilot (Contact manager), Gramps (genealogy), GnuCash (finances) and Firestarter (a firewall). All of these applications are maintained by the Ubuntu developer community and are free under the GNU license. The download and install process took about 30 minutes, primarily due to the slowness of my Internet connection at that time.

Once all my software was installed, I copied the data files from the old 32-bit partition to the new 64-bit partition and I was off and running. All the data was immediately accessible and it was apparent I had lost nothing in the transition to 64-bit. I am also very pleased with the responsiveness of all the 64-bit applications. I can't say that there is a tremendous increase in speed, but the time required to load applications does seem to be reduced. OpenOffice for one, opens in about half the time that was required in the 32-bit system. The opening logo appears with little or no delay after clicking on the shortcut icon on the desktop. That alone is a real improvement.

The last item I needed to install was the multifunction printer. As I mentioned earlier it is a Brother MFC machine and the printer/scanner drivers are not provided by Ubuntu. Brother has a web site devoted to the Linux drivers for its products. They also provide installation information for both 32-bit and 64-bit systems. To get the printer drivers to work with my 64-bit system I had to download and install a specific library file. That was available through the Synaptic Package Manager under the System menu. All I needed to do was select the file and click on Apply. The Package Manager downloaded and installed the file. Then I used the command line function in a terminal window to install the printer drivers and the scanner drivers. This was simplified by the fact that Brother had the complete command in their installation instructions. It was very simple to copy it into the command line in the terminal window. Testing both the printer and the scanner indicated that the overall process was successful.

All of the software applications that came with Ubuntu 9.04 were 64-bit as it does not work with 32-bit software. Also, I didn't need to specify what I need for any of the applications I downloaded, with the exception of the Brother scanner software. Both the Add/Remove software function and the Synaptic Package Manager select only the 64-bit applications from the various repositories. When it comes to using a 64-bit Windows OS, it won't be this easy. Although 64-bit Windows can also run some 32-bit applications, this doesn't apply to all software. So in going 64-bit with Windows will require replacement with 64-bit applications. This is especially true of anti-virus software, firewalls and any other utilities that work directly with the hard drive. This means that more time, and money, will be involved in going from 32-bit to 64-bit Windows.

I have been using this new Ubuntu installation for just about a month. Everything I have tried has worked without complaint. I have used both the broadband wireless connection as well as the WiFi in a couple of hotspots. Both have worked without the need for any additional setup. The wireless connection menu comes up with a single click on the wireless icon on the top of the desktop page. Then one click connects the broadband. Once I turn on the WiFi the same menu shows me any available WiFi connections. It also indicates whether or not a password is required for access. My broadband connection has shown download speeds ranging from 1 Kb/S to 3100 Kb/S (kilobits per second). That of course was in different locations. The speed really depends on how close I am to a cell phone tower. Both wireless operations are quite simple and provide me with alternate means of getting to the Internet.

One thing I had not anticipated was the size of the update that needed to be installed after I had my system up and running. I knew there would be some updates since this version had been released several months earlier. The Update Manager notified me that there was a total of 132 megabytes of files that needed to be downloaded and installed. These were various updates including some security updates. There was also an update to the Ubuntu kernel. This is the heart of the OS. So I clicked on OK and waited for the download and installation to be completed. This was one of the few times that I had to reboot the system after an installation. Unlike Microsoft, Ubuntu notifies you of new updates as they are available and the update rarely requires rebooting of the system.

After using this 64-bit version of Ubuntu, I wonder why I bothered to keep the 32-bit version. Now it just seems to be taking up space on my hard drive. There is no doubt in my mind that this 64-bit Ubuntu is a keeper. I hope I can say the same when I receive and install Windows 7.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years, developing software and assembling systems.

Using Linux

Written by Kerry Miller, Front Range PC Users Group, Colorado, <http://www.frpcug.org>, twriterext@gmail.com

For a long time, I have used the Linux operating system. I don't know why more people don't use Linux. Linux is a costless operating system for a Personal Computer.

In one of those earlier articles, I told the story of how back in the 1997 time frame I had a dual boot system: Microsoft Windows NT and Linux. I had copied my user files from the NTFS (file system) to a common Fat 16 (file system) that both Windows NT and Linux could use. I would boot Windows NT only when I wanted to check a setting. After I had most of my user files on the Linux file system (ext2, I think) I went to boot Windows NT. The message on the screen translated to "I am sick fix me". I promptly re-formatted the disk that held Windows NT and haven't looked back.

There are many different distributions (variations) of Linux: Red Hat Fedora, Suse, Ubuntu (to name only a few). Each distribution has its own personality. I use Fedora 10 as it calls itself as it boots. I have used Red Hat for years simply because it is compatible with the way I want to use a computer.

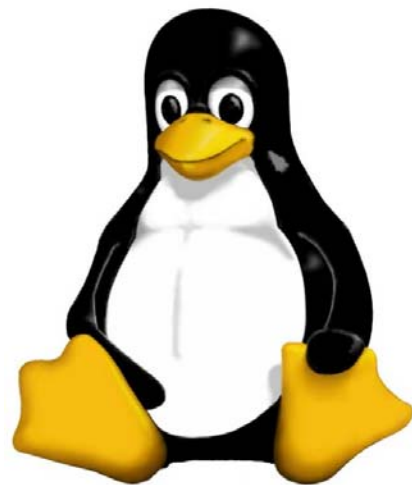
As far as using Linux is concerned, all you need to do is to place the media (e.g., CD) in a media reader attached to your computer and install the Linux operating system. You may also download an ISO* file for a CD or DVD and burn (write) the ISO file onto the media. In some cases you are allowed to download the operating directly onto your hard disk. There are even versions of Linux to load onto a flash drive.

When you are loading an operating system, there are usually a few questions to answer, such as the language you want to use, what keyboard you are using and what mouse you are using. Most distributions check the computer for the amount of memory (RAM) and peripherals that are installed. If there is enough memory they will use a graphical installation. As far as I know, this is similar to Microsoft.

If your computer has enough horse power and memory to run what is called Xwindows (a computer software system and network protocol that provides a graphical user interface (GUI) for networked computers--see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xwindows>), there is a choice of desktop applications: GNOME or KDE. You will find a group of people that prefer the KDE desktop and a different group of people that like the GNOME desktop. I use the GNOME desktop which uses three menus: Applications, Places and System instead of a start menu. The KDE desktop uses a single menu more like Microsoft's start menu.

There is also the ability to place icons on the desk top so that a mouse can be used to open an application or even a data file.

The usual applications included (all free) are: Firefox (web browser), OpenOffice.org (compatible with Microsoft Office, including reading and writing Microsoft Office files). There is a choice of text editors, some of which are dependent on the desktop of choice. There are even games and graphic applications. Not to mention photo editing programs (e.g., GIMP). And there is a host of other applications that may be downloaded.



Continued on page 35

The web site <http://www.gnu.org/> is a good place to learn more about Linux. The Ubuntu distribution, as I said, fits me. Use a google search to find the many (if not all) Linux possibilities. It can be said that using Linux is similar to using Microsoft Windows in many ways.

An additional note: There are some shops that custom build computers without an operating system at a reduced the price, and others that will install an operating system of choice (such as one of the Linux distributions).

The simple truth is that, especially when used with Xwindows and either the GNOME or KDE desktop, the operation of a computer with a Linux operating system is so similar to Microsoft Windows there is hardly any learning curve to it. Linux uses (in my opinion) a more understandable file arrangement (called the ext3 file system).

There are some computer hardware issues that need attention. Connect to <http://www.linuxdevices.com/> for a good place to verify the hardware possibilities.

There is a Linux users group in Fort Collins called the North Colorado Linux Users Group. Connect to <http://www.nclug.org/> for more information. These folks can and will answer any questions you have.

*ISO is an acronym for International Standards Organization. An ISO file is an archive file in a format defined by the ISO. For more information on this topic, connect to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iso_file.



Hardware Review

iPod Touch

Published by Apple

A review by Nancy De Marte, SIG Chairperson, Sarasota PCUG, Florida,
www.spcug.org, ndemate@Verizon.net



Decades ago, the technology community was predicting that someday computers would be integrated into our everyday life – in cars, phones, refrigerators. This idea seemed far-fetched to us conservative PC users. What we couldn't imagine was a device the size of a playing card that could perform almost all the functions of a desktop computer. But it's true. A few months ago I bought one of these magic items, an iPod Touch.

The original iPod has been around since 2001 as a portable device produced by Apple and acting primarily as a media player with excellent tone quality. The iPod Touch, introduced in late 2007 as a non-phone version of the iPhone, is also a media player, but does much, much more. Besides listening to my favorite songs through headphones while at the gym, I have used my iPod Touch to surf the Internet, read my email from my Verizon and Yahoo accounts, check my stocks, store and view my digital photos, and play a variety of interesting and brain-boosting games, all without spending a penny beyond the purchase price of the iPod Touch.

How could I do all those activities on something which weighs only 4 ounces and has a 3.5 inch screen? First, let's look at what is required to make the iPod Touch perform: a Mac or PC with an XP SP2 or higher operating system and a 2.0 USB port, a free account with iTunes, and a Wi-Fi connection. The PC is needed to recharge the iPod, to download and install your iTunes application from www.iTunes.com, and to visit the comprehensive iTunes store, where you can download free and paid little applications (called "apps") for your iPod Touch.

The iPod Touch comes loaded with several basic applications, including the Safari web browser, Mail, a photo gallery, a notepad, calculator, stocks, and weather. But that's only the beginning. At last check there were over 80,000 free applications available in various categories at iTunes, such as utilities, news, sports, and games. For a total of less than \$5.00, I have downloaded several games, including the old Pac Man; media links such as the Weather Channel, MapQuest, and Shutterfly; podcasts, which are free video or audio recordings of public media broadcasts, and some unique items such as a piano which really plays on the built in speaker. For a small fee (\$.99 - \$20.00), you can purchase songs or albums, online books, TV show episodes, and movies to rent or own.

Each time you connect the iPod Touch to the computer, iTunes opens and automatically "syncs" your iPod Touch; that is, makes sure the same music and apps which are in your library are also on your device, including ones you have just purchased or downloaded. Since I have copied my favorite songs and albums from my own audio CD's to iTunes, they also get synced each time at zero cost.

The most amazing part of the iPod Touch is the "touch." Except for a bar on top to turn on the iPod Touch and a button to open an application, all other tasks are performed by merely touching or dragging your finger across the screen. To see a thumbnail photo in full screen, just touch it. Turn the iPod Touch from vertical to horizontal to see a screen image horizontally. Enlarge the text in email or a web page by touching the screen with two fingers and gently drawing them apart to zoom in or together to zoom out. When you have finished reading an email message, just touch the recycle bin at the bottom of the screen and the message flows into the bin. The device also has an on screen keyboard to enter text or write an email. If you aren't a "texter," as I'm not, using the keyboard took a little getting used to. But I'm improving each time.

To access the Internet with iPod Touch, you need a Wi-Fi (wireless) connection. In our home, we have a wireless network for our two computers. The iPod Touch senses this each time it's turned on. When we were on vacation in the mountains, I found a friendly general store and restaurant with a public wireless connection. Since I don't store personal information on this device, I was able to read my mail safely while sipping a cup of tea.

So what are the disadvantages of the iPod Touch? The downside for many people will be the initial cost. Recently the cost for a second generation iPod Touch with 8GB storage capacity like mine has come down because a third generation version is available. But even so, it costs around \$200. However, once you own it and set it up, there are no more fees for Internet or any other function unless you choose to purchase music or applications. And with your own music and photos, plus free applications from the iTunes store, you can have a lot of enjoyment for just the purchase price.

There are more and more of these handheld devices on the market all the time. I chose not to purchase an iPhone because currently its phone functions require you to subscribe to the AT&T network. Since my family and many friends have Verizon as their cell phone carrier, I didn't want to switch. Someday soon, it appears that these restrictions surrounding cell phones will be lifted. Then I may look into an iPhone, which has all the capabilities of an iPod Touch and more. For now, though, I'm happy with my iPod Touch.

Software Review

Registry First Aid

Published by Rose City Software

A review by Herb Goldstein, Editor, Sarasota PCUG, Florida, www.spcug.org, pcugedit@verizon.net



Perhaps the greatest necessary evil in the Windows operating system is the registry. It was designed by a cyber-masochist as the brain behind all versions of Windows that controls their every function. Regardless of what procedure you undertake in Windows, it is almost certain that there are numerous entries, often coded or otherwise illegible, residing in this huge database that makes it possible or not to accomplish. From earliest startup to final shutdown, Windows is completely dependent on the integrity and proper functioning of the registry.

From this introduction it is clearly evident that the registry is nothing to be toyed with lightly by mere mortals. Yet every computer owner is constantly using, modifying and often tainting its contents in some way. It is little wonder that, in time, the registry can easily become a source of computerized grief. A contaminated, corrupted registry is perhaps the most common cause of a computer's slowdown, errors, or malfunction.

Now you would think that Microsoft, having designed this masterpiece, would have figured a way to keep it continuously in tune. No such luck! Fighting the battle of the registry is a task left to 99.5% of computer owners who know less about the registry than the secrets of the Universe.

Capitalizing on the economic opportunities in demystifying the necessary cleaning and tuning of this mystical database are a bevy of software designers and publishers that promise to easily and quickly do the job that no mere mortal is either capable or desirous of accomplishing. It is not surprising that the result is a very mixed bag of success, with many registry cleaners making the cure considerably worse than the disease.

How then is one to choose from among the vast array of registry cleaning software to select a product whose functions are way outside the proper scrutiny of which most computer owners are capable. Chance and luck unfortunately play a large role in choosing. Another is by recommendation, experience and common sense, a little of which I can perhaps, respectfully, offer.

In the course of several weeks or months, I install, uninstall and try lots of different software. Why not? A free trial version of almost everything is commonly available today. The result is that in time my registry is likely to become more of a mess than yours (without discounting the mess that is more than likely to already exist in yours).

I have looked at a sizeable number of trial versions of commonly available registry cleaners. Over a period of years and experience I have selected the same one consistently as my choice.....Registry First Aid, from Rose City Software (rosecitysoftware.com). The most important reason is that it does the job thoroughly, and very much most compelling, safely!

Most of the registry cleaners I examined were very fast, finding a sizable list of registry errors in just a few minutes. Registry First Aid (RFA) is slower than many of the others largely because it's the saf-



Continued on page 38

est! It is the only one I have seen that not only produces a categorized list of registry errors that need, it also provides an accurate reason for having selected each and every error. I have spent many hours looking into the validity of its reasons for hundreds of its selections and I have yet to find one that was incorrect. I am satisfied that RFA is right on the money with each and every one of its suggested corrections.

RFA offers to scan 11 different categories of registry components. Some frequently turn up little to no problems, while others (especially “invalid application paths”) found more than 2,800 errors in my registry on my last scan. The errors are carefully sorted and color coded as either completely safe to remove, remove with caution, or confront with extreme caution. The reason for each is explained with every item, something no other registry cleaner I have seen does.

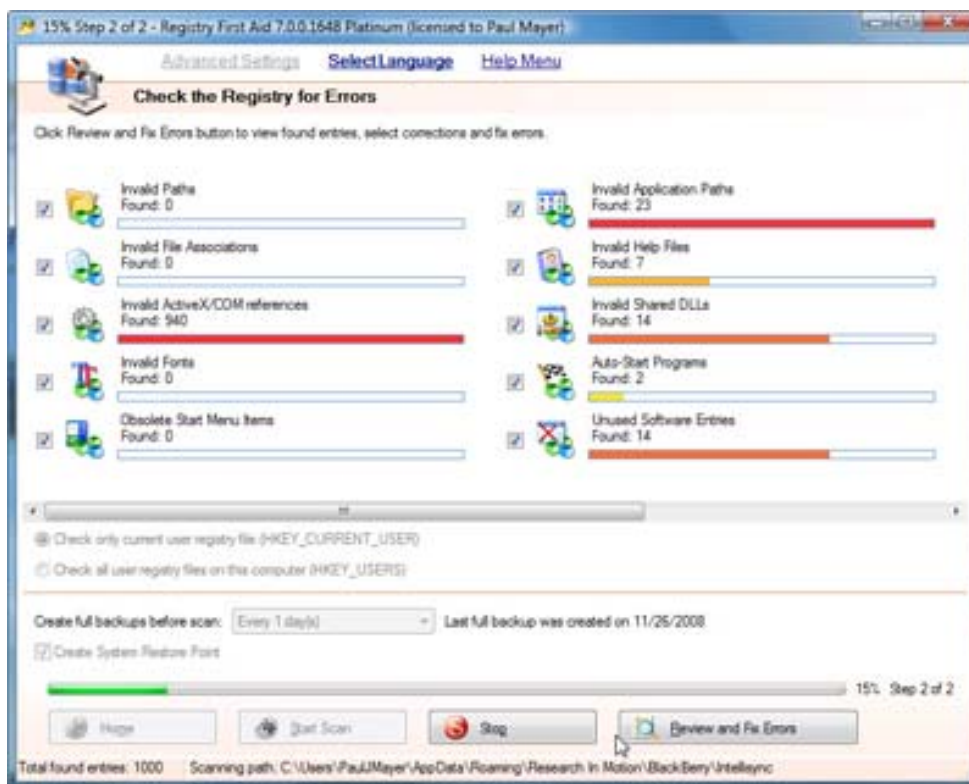
In some cases errors are listed for incorrect paths or locations, and RFA offers to put them in a properly valid placement, also something I have seen only in RFA.

After presenting its list of discovered errors and their suggested corrections, RFA permits you to select those errors you wish to have it correct. It also permits you to view any error directly in the registry itself if you wish. Before making corrections, RFA will back up the registry in case you wish to later undo and restore its condition prior to corrections. Talk about safety, these are all virtues I have not seen offered fully in any other registry cleaner.

RFA also provides a number of other very useful registry-related functions. A registry search feature will quickly find any reference you offer, perhaps to leftovers of uninstalled software. A registry defragment feature will permit your computer to run faster and more efficiently. A variety of plug-ins are offered, and registry backup jobs are safely stored for possible use at your selection.

I have offered an explanation of why registry cleaning is important and why my selection to do the job is RFA. I recommend a visit to the Rose City Software website where you can download a fully functional trial copy of RFA 7.0. If you select to purchase, you will find the cost very reasonable. If you have a previous version, you will find the latest filled with many nuances (including a great new interface) listed on their website that make the upgrade more than worthwhile.

A word of wisdom is possibly in order. There is almost nothing that you can do with your computer from the moment you turn it on that does not bring some degree of risk or ignores the necessity for caution. Merely receiving email can provide unseen dangers. Any procedure that modifies your operating system in any way can particularly present a serious problem. Registry cleaning is such a procedure. While not doing registry cleaning when necessary can seriously effect and degrade computer performance, the cleaning itself is also not without risks. Although I have stressed the safety I have found associated with RFA, bear very much in mind that computer users need to constantly be defensive. Before undertaking registry cleaning, be sure to make a full backup of your computer in addition to the registry backup that RFA itself will make. Creating a system restore point prior is also a good idea. Prevention is a far sight better than repairing!



Hardware Review

Nano Wireless Notebook Mouse

Published by Verbatim

A review by Patricia Hill, Review Editor, Computer Booters of Sun Lakes, AZ,
www.computerbooters.com, Booterpat@aol.com



OK, I admit it. I'm not the most coordinated person on the planet. I tried downhill skiing and screamed all the way down the hill. There are days my golf game sucks. More days than I admit. And I cannot master the touch pad on laptops or my new netbook. It's awkward and I never have my fingers in the right position.

Along comes the Verbatim Nano Wireless Notebook Mouse – in your choice of 6 colors. Now your mouse can match your notebook color. Cool!

The package comes with a 2.4 GHz mouse, receiver, two AAA batteries, software CD and Quick Start Guide. While the package is the usual hard plastic, cut along the back and the contents fall into your hand. Simple!




The 3-button mouse will feel comfortable in your hand and glide smoothly over your mouse pad. It's designed for either the right or left hand and works right out of the box or you can install the accompanying software to program the mouse.

The receiver is about the size of a dime. Put it in your laptop or netbook USB port and leave it there. No more schlepping a mouse and receiver. No more large receiver sticking out of your computer getting in the way. The receiver slips into the bottom of the mouse for storage which also turns off the batteries. Or leave in the USB port if it's a computer that you use all the time.

The Verbatim web site gives you a choice of dealers. Click on the mouse you want and you're shown a listing of various dealers, prices and in stock information. The lowest price I could find was as www.amazon.com. Pricing is \$22.95 to \$26.85 depending on color and qualifies for free shipping. It's a great price for a well made, easy to use mouse.



January 2010						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 We are closed. No classes today!  Happy New Year!	2 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
3	4	5 Board of Directors Crossroads Mall @ the Food Court 6:30 - 8:30 P.M. (Members are welcome to attend)	6	7 High Growth Stock Investing (adv) 6:30 - 8:30 P.M.	8 Small Business Server 8 - 10 A.M. *PRR*	9 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
10	11 General Meeting @ 7 - 9 P.M. 4888 Whirlwind Drive Presenter:	12	13	14	15	16 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 MCSE Study Group (Adv) 8:30 A.M. - Noon *PRR*
31						
AlamoPC Organization						

The Learning Center

Alamo PC Organization classes and study groups

HGSI Study Group

The premise of the HGS Investor SIG is, "Knowledge becomes stronger when passed on to others." We have created an environment for continuing education and open discussion between well informed members and guest speakers in matters of using Fundamental and Technical Analysis for the buying and selling of equities.

Contact: Maynard Burstein

<maynardb@juno.com> 735-3288

When: 1st Thursday, 6:30-8:30pm

Where: Contact Maynard for location

Pre-registration: Call Maynard

Technical Rating ★ - ★★★

Private or Semi-Private Tutorials - \$

Develop your skills at your own pace and at a time that fits your schedule. Introductory private tutorials for one, two, or three students. Choose from:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Basic Computer Skills, or
- Keyboarding/Typing

Contact: Learning Center (210) 736-0080 or 736-0700

When: Days and hours are arranged between the student(s) and teacher.

Where: Learning Center

Fees: 1 student: \$35 per hour, 10 hours for \$300. 2 or 3 students: per student—\$20 per hour, 10 hours for \$150

Pre-registration: Yes—call or visit the Learning Center

Technical Rating: ★

MCSE Advanced Study Group

The MCSE Advanced Study Group is designed for those who already have their MCSE certification.

Since space is limited and the subject matter is advanced, membership is restricted. Please contact Larry Lentz before attempting to attend.

Tuition fee: Cost of any books and registered tests.

When: Every Saturday morning from 8:30 am to 12 pm

Where: Communities in School, 1616 E. Commerce

Study Group Leader: Larry Lentz, (210) 826-8188

Small Business Server Study Group (SBS)

This is a forum for discussion and presentation of topics related to Microsoft's Small Business Server. The target audience includes, computer consultants, small business owners, and network administrators. The meetings begin with a "Taco Social" from 8 to 8:30 am followed by our presentation. Please contact Larry Lentz before attempting to attend.

When: First Friday of the month from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Where: Flexware, 10444 Gulfdale (about block off Isom)

Contact: Larry Lentz for information and registration. Phone (210) 826-8188. Visit the group web site at <http://www.LentzComputer.net/SBS>.

Technical Content Ratings

- | | |
|------|--|
| ★ | For the beginner, no experience necessary and no prerequisite. |
| ★★ | Assumes some basic familiarity with the subject but is not a technical course. |
| ★★★ | Assumes that the student is somewhat familiar with the subject and will discuss. |
| ★★★★ | Assumes that the student is competent in the material and will be technical. |

Help Numbers

Can you help a new member with a new computer? Are you proficient in software not listed? Can you help with a title currently showing only one volunteer? Call Linda Bianchi at 226-2460 or email her at <education@alamopc.org>.

1 Look down the list for the software program you need help with; note the number in front of the title.

2 Then look down the list to the right for the corresponding number for the person who may be able to help you.

Please observe the times given by the volunteers name to call for phone help.

Step One

1 Computers for Beginners

2 Windows 98

3 Windows XP

Microsoft Office

4 Word

5 Excel

6 PowerPoint

7 Publisher

8 WinFax Pro

Corel Office

9 WordPerfect

10 CorelDraw

11 Quattro Pro

12 Paint Shop Pro

Photoshop

13 Adobe Photoshop

Internet and E-mail

14 Internet Basics / ISP Connection

15 Web Page Development

16 Internet Explorer

17 MS Outlook Express

18 Opera

19 Mozilla

20 Dreamweaver

21 .Net

22 Flash

23 RoadRunner

Open Office

24 OpenOffice

Financial

25 Quick Books

26 Quicken

Auction Online

27 eBay

Genealogy

28 Family Origins for Windows

29 Genealogy

Communications / Management

30 Time&Chaos

31 Act

32 Goldmine

Data Base

33 Access

34 AlphaFour

35 dBase

36 Paradox

37 MySQL

Networking

38 Networking

Other

39 Hardware / Setting Up A New PC

40 Maintenance and Security

41 Home Help

Step Two


Expertise	Name	Phone	Availability	E-mail
(1, 5, 6, 3, 12, 23, 26, 38, 41)	John Bolton	658-3060	6pm-9pm M-F	
(1, 3, 14)	Joe Barth	696-5783	7pm-9pm Tu, Th, Sat	jbarth@swbell.net
(2, 3, 4, 16, 17, 23, 29, 38, 39, 40, 41)	Bruce Cramer	865-2933	9am-3pm M-F, Sat	service@pcpro4u.com
(3, 5)	Bill Eastridge	223-8743	10am-6pm M-F, Sat, Sun	
(4, 15, 17, 33)	Bill Hudson	490-6513	7pm-10 pm M-F, Sat, Sun	bhudson3@satx.rr.com
(4, 9, 14, 27)	William Hudson	824-6910	3pm-8pm M-F, Sat	rwsh@earthlink.net
(19, 24, 30, 37)	Chris Montgomery	490-2415	7pm-9pm M-F / noon-6pm Sat, Sun	
(3, 16, 17)	Ted Ressler			catechist@gmail.com
(1, 3, 14, 16, 17, 40)	Don Robinson	497-3737	9am-5pm M-F, Sat, Sun	dl7266@swbell.net
(10)	Stephen Tech, Jr	675-2880	5:30pm-9pm M - F	stephentechjr@yahoo.com
(9)	Cynthia Thompson	655-1058	7pm-9pm M-F / 10am-4pm Sat, Sun	cynthom@satx.rr.com
(4)	Christel Villarreal			christel.villarreal@gmail.com

If you are unable to find help in the list above, consider contacting the desk staff volunteers at the Alamo PC Computer Learning Center. 736-0700 or 736-0080. 10am - 4pm M-F, Sat Remember these volunteers are all levels of expertise and some may not be able to answer your questions, but may be able to find someone who can.

Classified Ads

E-mail your ad to the Editor, PC Alamo at: editor@alamopc.org. Copy deadline is 10th of month preceeding publication. Classified ads are free to members of Alamo PC.

Wanted Classified ads from members of Alamo PC. It costs nothing and it's a good way to sell or buy any computer-related item.



100% gray cotton golf shirts with pocket and embroidered full-color

Alamo PC logo

Available at the Learning Center in a wide variety of sizes.

\$20.00

Call the Learning Center at **736-0700**

Alamo PC Organization has your Number!

Your membership number entitles you to a full year of membership privileges. Established in 1983, this non-profit, all-volunteer organization is dedicated to helping members keep up with trends and technologies.

Monthly Meetings

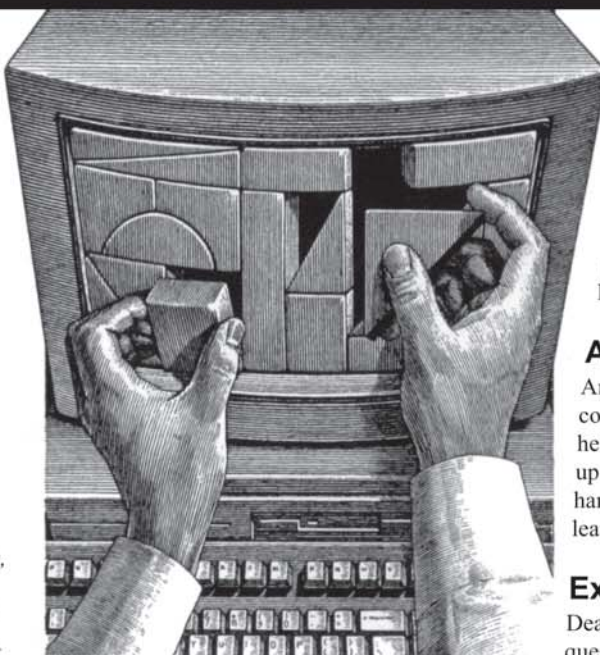
Every month you can attend a presentation meeting, which is open to our 2,500 members. Local and national companies provide the first glimpses of new products and discounts on existing products. There are also drawings for FREE hardware and software.

Award-Winning Magazine

When you join Alamo PC, you'll receive its award-winning magazine, *PC Alamode*, each month. You'll learn of group activities and you'll enjoy the reviews of new products from your fellow members. Regular columnists will give you insight to this fast-paced, dynamic industry. As a member, you can sell your outgrown stuff in our FREE Classified ads section.

Special Interest Groups and Classes

Alamo PC offers more than 30 Study Groups and classes on specific software programs for beginners to expert. These small groups typically meet once a month in one of our two hands-on computer labs or classrooms and provide an opportunity to get answers in an informal setting. There are groups for word processing, Web design, graphics and programming and even study groups to help you get Microsoft Certified. You can attend as many SIGs as you'd like and, as you become experienced, even lead one!



Internet (www.alamopc.org)

Alamo PC is on the Internet, and more importantly, Alamo PC can help you get on the Internet too. If you're already on the Internet, attending one of Alamo PC's Internet SIGs will help you to become a savvy Internet surfer.

Alamo PC SeniorComp

Are you age 45 or older and not into computers or the Internet yet? Let us help. Contact Alamo PC today and sign up for the very next class. Classes are hands-on at a pace to match your learning style.

Expert Help

Deadlocked with a computer problem or question? Get access to personal help from expert Alamo PC members. Just call! If you need someone to diagnose hardware and software problems, try "THE DOCTOR IS IN," a free clinic where members bring in their computers and allow our experts to help diagnose and often fix many PC ailments.

APPLY FOR YOUR NUMBER -- JOIN NOW!

To join, return the application below or sign up online at www.alamopc.org. Your \$45 dues covers your entire family!e. You may use your credit card or send your personal check. If you need more information, call (210) 736-0700. Shortly after joining, you'll receive a membership card entitling you to all rights and privileges and discounts. **JOIN TODAY!**

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS NOW AVAILABLE: Call 210-736-0700 for details.



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PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS. This information will be kept in confidence - it will be used for planning purposes only

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ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE H: _____ W: _____ FAX: _____

DATE OF BIRTH: ____/____/____ OCCUPATION: _____

EMPLOYER: _____ TITLE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Please accept my membership for: ☐ 1 year -\$25

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal

Method of payment: ☐ Check ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Credit Card # _____ EXP DATE: ____/____/____ SIGNATURE: _____

Make checks payable to Alamo PC Organization and mail to: **Alamo PC, PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX 78265-5180**

IMPORTANT ☐ I do not authorize Alamo PC Organization to release my name address and phone to selected vendors

PCA JAN05

Alamo PC Organization, Inc.

Renew Now!

Isn't it about time for you to consider all the benefits of membership with Alamo PC? Renew your membership before the year is over!

For more information call the Learning Center at
210.736.0700



Consider A Matching Donation, or a Donation To Alamo PC Organization

Increasing members knowledge and effective use of personal computers, and providing other membership services and access to the expertise of other members, does not happen without an associated monthly expense. In recent months, although member dues and ads have offset the majority of the required monthly expense, and cost-saving measures are constantly being reviewed, the total amount of monthly funds generated has been less than the monthly expense. The shortfall has had to come from reserve funds, which have been severely depleted. We would like to offer everyone the opportunity to help rebuild the reserve fund.

If you employer has a "Matching Donation" program, please consider that you can double a donation amount by participating. All donations are tax deductible and can be dropped off at the Alamo PC Learning Center in Crossroads Mall (near the underground parking entrance, accessed from Fredericksburg Road) or mailed to **Alamo PC Organization, PO Box 65180, San Antonio, TX, 78265-5180**. Checks, Money Orders, etc., should be made payable to **Alamo PC Organization** and identified as "Donation."

On-line donations can be made at <<https://training.alamopc.org/donations>>. If you do not have on-line access, credit card donations can be made by mail if you legibly provide the following information on a piece of paper: Full Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Phone Number (to verify you want your card charged), Name of Card, Card Number, Card Expiration Date, Donation Amount, and your usual Signature. Please help us keep our membership dues low, meet our monthly expenses and rebuild the reserve fund.

