

MONITOR

Next Meeting
Tuesday, March 10

Mac Possibilities with Steve Rea

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What To Do When Your Internet Connection Disappears

by Gregory Anderson

One minute you're cruising around the Internet. YouTube, Wonkette, eBay—every-thing's flying along. Then you step out of the room for a while, maybe even overnight, and by the time you come back the connection is dead. The browser presents a pitifully empty error page for every site you try to visit. No email is coming in, and that little connection icon in Vista's Notification Area is in alert mode. We can help.

Network routers and most broadband modems have admin consoles you can use to troubleshoot connection status and settings.

First, make sure the problem is what you think it is. Plenty of things can go wrong with Internet-enabled programs and their online materials, and not all involve an Internet connection directly. Try restarting the program in question to make sure the problem isn't isolated to one application. The aforementioned connection icon in Windows can be a good clue that something is wrong systemwide. Testing several different kinds of applications (not just different Web sites) is also a good step. If your browser, your email client, and your online music service are all unable to connect, you can be certain that the issue is bigger than any single application. Ruling out security software, Windows itself, and your own hardware can be a little trickier, however. Check your antivirus, firewall, and any other monitoring utilities to make sure they aren't blocking your connection. If you have other machines on your network, now would be a good time to check them, as

well. Now look at the lights on your router and modem. Are they blinking (or not blinking) in their normal ways, with both WAN (wide-area network) and LAN (local-area network) indicators functioning normally? You may need to consult the manufacturer's documentation to figure out the blink codes, but they may be telling you something very important. If the modem appears to be normal but the router doesn't, your problem may be with your LAN rather than your connection to the Internet.

Next, you should commit this phrase to memory: When in doubt, reboot. Once you're confident you are dealing with a connectivity issue, the first best step (as in nearly every situation) is to restart the components in question. Start with your PC. Shut it down. Then power down your network router. It may have a power switch on the back, or you may need to simply pull the plug. Keep the router off and reboot the modem. To reboot the modem, first reset, turn off, or unplug the modem. Keep it off for 10 seconds and then turn it back on. Let it power up and see if it connects successfully to your ISP (Internet service provider). Your ISP's documentation can help you discern meaning from the flashing lights, but a solid green from the WAN indicator is usually a good sign. Then bring up the router. Let it connect to the modem. Finally, power on your PC. Rebooting may not always solve the problem, but it eliminates most temporary glitches and removes another easily solved possibility.

Use the reset button or power switch to restart your broadband modem and router during the troubleshooting process.

Take a few moments to look for obvious physical problems. Start with your connection. Check each cable, beginning with the network cable running from the back of your PC to the router. Check the cables between the router and DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) or cable modem. Then check your phone or cable lines. Make sure each sits firmly in its port and that there aren't obvious cuts or frays. It may sound silly, but take 10 seconds to make sure everything's powered on. You never know when a curious cat or mischievous toddler knocked something loose. Finally, check to make sure that the other services from your ISP are working. If you're a DSL customer and your phone is working properly, the problem is not with your phone line. On the other hand, if, for instance, cable customers see snow on the TV, they know the issue isn't limited to just broadband. Contact your service provider to learn about outages in your area or problems with your overall account.

Now that the easy stuff is out of the way, it's time to delve into more serious troubleshooting. First, connect to your network router's admin console using Internet Explorer, if possible. The URL is normally an IP (Internet Protocol) address. 192.168.0.1 is common, though you'll have to check the router's documentation for model-specific details. If you can't get to the router, the status of your Internet connection is moot. In that case, follow the manufacturer's troubleshooting tips or find a way to access Smart Computing's Tech Support Center. If you can log in to the router successfully, check its WAN status and other settings from the administrative screens. Again, you'll have to check the documentation for both the router and your ISP in order to learn the precise location of each setting and its proper value, but often, restoring a corrupted setting or releasing and reacquiring the connection from the modem will restore lost connectivity.

If you can't find a solution in the router or modem's utilities, contact your ISP's support hotline. Make a list of all the steps you've taken so far, as well as all the relevant settings from your router and PC. Have your account information ready, as well. They'll be able to let you know about any broader network outages that may be affecting your connection as well as anything specific to your account. Some Internet outages are account-configuration issues rather than technical glitches. The help desk can also delve deeper into modem and network settings than you can. You may need to exercise patience as they walk through their scripts, but you'll get nearer and nearer a solution as you work with them to work through the possibilities.

Be Prepared

Losing Internet connectivity can really put a crimp in normal troubleshooting. It's hard to find answers on Google or chat with your ISP's support reps when you can't get online. Take a few minutes now to gather the following information in one place so that you have it handy if you can't get online.

- Users manual for network router or wireless access point and cable/ DSL modem
- Setup instructions from your Internet Service Provider
- Any installation discs or software provided by your ISP or modem manufacturer
- Your machine's standard IP settings; retrieve them in Vista by entering cmd in the Start Search box and then entering ipconfig into Windows' command prompt

- Telephone contact information for your ISP's technical support help desk.

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Media Notes

by Bill Petitt

Southeast Virginia Computer Group

Intel has brought out a new set of CPU's along with the accompanying chipset and motherboards. Up until yesterday, that's the way I had planned on going with my next new computer. But, as always happens, AMD has announced a new iteration of their biggest and baddest CPU, the Phenom II. Alas, another quandary. I'll let you know which way I go.

Big Skype Update

Skype will release a big upgrade to its PC client software early in February, making video conferencing a central feature of the new interface.

The company has also released a beta version of Skype for Google Android and other Java-enabled phones, and said a version for Apple's iPhone is in the works. Skype also plans to increase its focus on business customers this year.

Skype 4.0, which has been in beta for several months, will be released in early February for PC users, with an equivalent for the Mac OS due later this year, Scott Durchslag, Skype's chief operating officer, told reporters at the Consumer Electronics Show last month.

The update includes a new codec that can handle video and audio twice as efficiently as the current version, according to Durchslag, giving smoother video and clearer voice calls. Skype 4.0 will support 30-frame-per-second video for people on fast enough connections, he said.

"The only thing I would caution is don't forget it's on," he joked, as he demonstrated the software with a video call from Europe. "Luckily I'm at this press conference and not in my shower this morning."

The client displays video in full-screen mode and the interface has a large green button that makes video calling more prominent. It also supports picture-in-picture, so the caller can see himself and the person he is calling.

A video call between three or more people presents "unique challenges" over Skype's peer-to-peer infrastructure, however, but it is high on Skype's priority list, Durchslag said. "Hopefully we'll have it in the not-too-distant future," he said.

Video is popular among Skype's 370 million users. On Christmas Day, 41 percent of all Skype calls were

video calls as people used it to connect with relatives and friends, he said.

Skype is also coming to more devices. Skype Lite, the Java-based client for phones, should be available free from the Google Android store in the coming days. Along with T-Mobile's G1 Android phone, it will run on more than 100 Java-enabled phones from Motorola, LG, Samsung, Nokia and Sony Ericsson, Skype said.

The company has developed a Skype client for the iPhone but needs to reduce its power consumption before it can release it, Durchslag said.

More businesses are looking at Skype as a way to cut communications costs, but Durchslag acknowledged that the software still lacks features that businesses require, as well as a services infrastructure to support businesses.

It will enlist value-added resellers and systems integrators this year to provide those services. It will also add better security and management capabilities, and the ability to record digital video, which some call centers require.

He didn't give specifics about the planned business features but said Skype is likely to start by targeting small and mid-sized businesses.

Ok, I've found something for all you guys with more money to spend than you can find things to buy:

Sponsored Resource: Ten quick fixes for the worst security nightmares

Sponsored Resource: Learn more about ultra light notebooks from Asus and the best warranty in the industry.

AT&T To Launch In-Car Satellite TV Service

AT&T has revealed plans for its own robust, satellite-based in-car TV service. AT&T Cruisecast, slated to launch this spring, promises 22 channels of satellite TV at launch and 20 more of satellite radio-but will cost serious money: \$1299 for the system, and \$28 a month for the satellite TV service (developed in conjunction with satellite industry veteran RaySat).

A final channel lineup is still being developed, but AT&T says it will include lots of family-friendly entertainment, including Disney Channel, Disney XD, Discovery



Kids, Animal Planet, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network Mobile, USA, Comedy Central, MSNBC, CNN Mobile Live and CNBC.

The system requires installation of a 3-pound, 11.3-by-10.3-by-4.3-inch antenna on the roof of your vehicle. AT&T describes this as “not particularly noticeable,” but I’d take that observation with a grain of salt: Check out the rooftop image, above.

AT&T says its technology addresses shortcomings of other in-car entertainment systems. For example, the company says, its breakthrough buffering technology keeps the show going even when you’re under a tunnel or other line-of-site obstacle.

Avis and Budget car rental services have announced plans to make the Cruisecast service available in rental cars at some locations for \$9 a day or \$63 a week

TiVo’s Cool New Video Search

TiVo users now have a new way to find video content right from their couch. The DVR service in January, rolled out the beta of TiVo Search, a new system that helps you find content you’re interested in from many different sources and to search in interesting new ways.

Owners of TiVo HD, HD XL and Series 3 settop boxes will find TiVo Search under the “Music, Photos & Showcases” menu item. With the new system, you search for a TV show, for instance, by typing in its name. Once you’ve found the series you’re looking for, it’s easy to find all sorts of related information. TiVo Search, for instance, gives season and episode numbers for each upcoming show, so you can find that one elusive Seinfeld episode you missed.

It will also let you know not only about upcoming showings from your cable or satellite provider, but also alert you to opportunities to buy or rent the video from services like Amazon On Demand. It also finds related videos from sources like YouTube.

TiVo Search also suggests similar shows – it’s top suggestion for a series similar to “Arrested Development” was “30 Rock,” not a bad recommendation. And you can click to see the cast of the show you’re interested in, then find other movies and tv shows they’re in.

My one gripe about the demo I tried: The system was extremely slow. TiVo officials say it’s a beta and they’re working on figuring out how to scale the system so it won’t crawl.

Windows 7 Beta Goes Public

Many of the reviews repeat the same information: Aero Glass is glassier than ever, performance tends

to be faster than Vista (or at least faster than Vista was pre-SP1), and gosh, those taskbar icons are BIG.

There has been much rejoicing over the elimination of the sidebar. Although it was a feature that I liked, I’m just as happy with the free floating gadgets in Windows 7—and I can line them up on the right side of the screen just like the Vista sidebar did. There’s one default gadget included in Win7 that didn’t come with Vista, and which I really like: the Media Center gadget that gives you one-click access to your recorded TV and other Media Center content. All the rest of the included gadgets are holdovers from Vista. Now that the sidebar is gone, you access the Gadget Gallery by right clicking the desktop.

Speaking of the sidebar being “gone,” you’ll still see sidebar.exe in the Task Manager’s Processes tab if you’re running any gadgets on the desktop. Apparently they all run in the same process, as they did when the actual bar was there in Vista. If you close one or more of the gadgets, the amount of memory used by sidebar.exe decreases.

Something else that’s gone, but not really, is the much maligned User Account Control (UAC) security feature. It’s still there, but it’s much more polite and less in-your-face than its Vista counterpart. I’ve only run across UAC a few times in Win7, even in setting up the OS initially. The best part is that now you can adjust UAC settings to your preference. You’ll find this option in the new Action Center in Control (which replaces Vista’s Security Center and also incorporates maintenance tasks like Windows Update and Windows Backup). The slider on the UAC configuration screen gives you four options: Always Notify, Notify Only When Programs Try to Make Changes (the default), Notify Only When Programs Try to Make Changes and Don’t Dim the Desktop, or Never Notify. The ability to adjust these settings will make many, many people happy.

While you’re rooting around in the Control Panel, you might think at first glance that the option for the Classic Control Panel view has been removed. Luckily, you can still get to it by clicking “All Control Panel Items” at the end of the list of Categories. One interesting new Control Panel applet is Biometric Devices. Here you can allow logon via a fingerprint device. Then there’s a Clear Type Text Tuner that works like those awful eye exams in the optometrist’s office, where they ask you “Which looks better, this one or that one?”

Credential Manager provides a “vault” for storing usernames and passwords for servers, web sites and programs. Windows CardSpace, which you probably never used in Vista, is there for you to not use in

Windows 7. The Control Panel also contains a new applet for Windows SideShow, which makes me hope that perhaps more devices will be SideShow enabled. SideShow is a great feature supported by Vista, but few vendors make hardware that takes advantage of it.

You'll notice that the beta is light on built-in applications when compared to Vista.

There's no email program, no contacts or calendar, no Windows Messenger. DVD Maker, Fax and Scan and Media Player are there, and of course, so is Internet Explorer (version 8). You'll still find most of the same apps in the Accessories folder, including the excellent snipping tool that was introduced with Vista, and there's also a new Sticky Notes application.

Some of the old, familiar apps have gotten updates that make them more usable. For instance, WordPad has a new ribbon style interface that makes it look more like Word, with icons for changing the line spacing, increasing and decreasing paragraph indent, formatting text as a subscript or superscript, inserting pictures, inserting drawings from Paint and more. And speaking of Paint, it got the ribbon treatment, too. It's now easier to crop, resize and rotate, insert shapes, select line width and brushes, and change the view.

I'd have to say that my favorite part of the new OS is the improvement in the area of file organization and search. My first look at Windows Explorer had me hopping mad. "What have they done with my file system hierarchy?" I wanted to know. The familiar file tree that's been in the left pane since, well, forever, was nowhere to be seen. Instead all I saw were a bunch of "libraries." But as I began to work with those libraries and to understand just how powerful this feature is, I stopped missing the file tree. In fact, now when I go back to Vista Explorer, it feels hopelessly cluttered with that (mostly) unnecessary hierarchy. Never fear, though, it's not as if you can't access the hierarchy if you really want to; that's just a click or two away.

How-to: Burn your Windows 7 .ISO to DVD disc

You will probably get your copy of Windows 7 in the form of an ISO file. As you know, you will have to do some sort of conversion to be able to install it on a computer. Here's the way to do it.



#2 - Download and install ImgBurn

Rather than try muddling through with burning the .ISO file with whatever tools you might already have installed, download ImgBurn and use that. That way we're all on the same page!

#3 - Burn the .ISO file to DVD

OK, pop a blank DVD into your DVD writer drive (for now I'm assuming that you actually have a DVD writer, if you don't I'll show you something else you can do in a moment). With that done, fire up ImgBurn. Select Write image file to disc.

Point the Source to the .ISO file you downloaded and then click on the big button at the bottom-left of the window to kick off the disc writing process.

And then after a short wait, you're done!

Now you've successfully burned the .ISO file to the DVD ... congratulations!

#4 - Use the DVD

You can now use the DVD like any other OS install disc ... pop it in the DVD drive of the system you want to install Windows 7 onto and boot up the PC and you should get that Press any key to boot from CD or DVD message. Press any key to kick off the proceedings!

What if you haven't got a DVD burner or just don't want to hand over an entire machine to Windows 7 beta testing? Are you stuck? Nope! You have two options:

Option #1 - Dual boot

Lifehacker <<http://lifehacker.com/5126781/how-to-dual-boot-windows-7-with-xp-or-vista>> has a good post on how to do this.

Option #2 - Go virtual!

Why give over an entire PC to a single OS when most are powerful enough to run two OSes side-by-side. To do this download and install Microsoft's free Virtual PC 2007. Once you've installed it run the application and it will guide you through creating a new virtual machine.

Most of the default settings will work for you but when asked for the operating system, pick Windows Vista, and when asked about virtual hard disk options, create a new virtual hard disk. Then, from the Virtual PC Console select the virtual machine you created and click on Start.

As soon as the virtual machine fires up, click on CD from the menu and choose Capture ISO Image ... and select the Windows 7 .ISO and click Open .

Now click on Action and then Reset to kick off the Windows 7 install process.

Vista Annoyances fixed in Windows 7

#1 Preview Pane in Windows Explorer – Vista, it takes at least three mouse clicks, plus a selection from a cascading menu, to show the Preview pane, and you have to repeat the process to hide it again. With Windows 7 you can preview a file with one quick click.

#2 Overcomplicated Shut Down – Vista’s Shutdown menu has been roundly criticized for its cryptic icons and unintuitive options. In Windows 7, it’s been simplified dramatically to an easy-to-read, easy-to-customize text menu.

#3 Arranging Windows, Awkwardly – Ever try to arrange two windows side by side in Windows Vista (or XP, or Windows 98, for that matter)? Windows 7 makes it dead simple with some genuinely innovative new window management gestures.

#4 Unpleasant User Account Control – UAC is the Vista feature everyone loves to hate. Security always involves trade-offs with convenience, but with Windows 7, there’s a lot less to dislike about UAC.

#5 Ultra-minimalist Defragmentation Utility – The colorful, almost mesmerizing progress display from the XP-and-earlier Defrag utility is gone and never coming back. But Windows 7 does restore some much-needed progress indicators and offer more control than the stark Vista version.

#6 No options backup –

<<http://blogs.zdnet.com/bott/?p=632&page=7>> In Windows Vista, every edition has a file backup program, but you can’t choose individual files or folders to back up. Windows 7 restores that option, courtesy of a “Let me choose” option that indicates a refreshing change of attitude for Microsoft’s UI designers.

Will Your Old Lenses

Work on a DSLR?

Buying a new digital SLR soon? I’ve been asked if lenses from a film camera will work on a digital SLR.

The lenses from your old camera may work on a new DSLR. But, you’ll need to select your new camera carefully. You should also know that the lenses may not work quite as you would expect.

First, in order for the lenses to work, the cameras must use the same mount. That means you’ll probably need to stick with the same brand camera. There

are exceptions, of course. Nikon lenses will work on Nikons and Fujifilm cameras. Minolta lenses work on Sony cameras. And Pentax lenses will work on Samsung cameras.

Of course, some manufacturers change lens mounts from time to time. Also, some lens features like autofocus may not work with some cameras. So, I recommend you make a list of the lenses you own. Then, speak with someone at a camera shop. A professional will be able to guide you to a compatible camera.

You also need to be aware of the lens crop. Digital camera sensors are usually smaller than a frame of 35mm film. So, you’ll get a different angle of view. This can be difficult to figure out for new digital photographers.

To make things easier, manufacturers list crop factors. The average crop factor is about 1.5. You multiply this by the lens’ focal length. A 50mm lens behaves like a 75mm lens on a camera with a 1.5 crop factor. Telephoto lenses become more powerful. Wide angle lenses become weaker.

It is also worth noting that light hits digital sensors differently than it does film. So, digital-specific lenses have special coatings. These coatings reduce ghosting and flaring. Some photographers dispute the importance of these coatings, though.

Just remember, if your new digital SLR is the same brand as your old lenses, there is a good possibility that they will work together. You might have to spring for some sort of adaptor and lose the autofocus capability.

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Sandbox Computing

by Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.

Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL

I spend a lot of my time surfing the web looking for research material; computer tech sources, genealogy data, vocal music and other information. This means that I am downloading many web pages, clicking on many links and generally opening up my computer to all types of malware. I always have to be aware that there are many traps on web pages that are just waiting for the unwary surfer. It used to be that having an up-to-date virus checker, a working firewall and parasite scanners, you could adequately protect your computer. That changed to some degree when the “drive by” downloads appeared. Now with the constant appearance of “holes” in the Windows operating system (XP & Vista) and the various web

browsers, it is less obvious that you can protect your computer from unwanted visitors. Microsoft recently (October 22, 2008) released an out-of-cycle patch (patch 958644) for Windows for what has been described as a very serious opening that could be exploited regardless of the browser you are using. There have also been recent articles on “clickjacking.” In this situation “buttons” or links are floated behind the link you think you are clicking. The only option to prevent this is to disable JavaScript. That creates more problems as JavaScript is a very important part of the whole web experience and is used on almost every page. So when you do know that you can run a script and when you can’t? Well, the “Sandbox” may be a way to surf safely and avoid the installation of malware on your computer without having to disable JavaScript.

My Sandbox experience is based on using the software application “Sandboxie” (www.sandboxie.com) with Windows XP and Firefox 3.0. As with everything related to computing, your results might be different. Sandboxie is a very small program, approximately 450 KB. So it is quick to download and doesn’t require a lot of memory to run.

Next, let’s take a look at what is meant when I talk about a computer sandbox. The sandbox is a complete “virtual computer” running in your computer’s memory. This virtual computer is isolated from the real operating system files and creates any files it needs for use within the sandbox. When the sandbox closes, everything in it disappears unless you chose to keep it. It’s like having a bank vault within a building where everything can be locked within the vault and nothing is removed without special permission. The neat thing is that nothing that happens within the sandbox can have any effect on your computer. This means that Trojans, rootkits and other malware have no chance to affect the operation of your computer outside of the sandbox. If a problem occurs when you are running in the sandbox, all you need to do is shut it down, you are returned to your normal computer operations and the malware is erased.

When Sandboxie is started it creates a sandboxed folder which contains a drive folder, user folder, and Registry “hives.” The “hive” is Microsoft’s term for collections of related Registry keys stored together. The parts of the Registry needed for sandboxed operations are stored in a hive which is then integrated into the Registry. There are also instances of Windows services stored within the sandboxed folder that can be accessed by applications running within the sandbox. These are referred to as “process ob-

jects” and are needed for normal operations. When the sandbox is running there may be instances of these objects running both sandboxed and non-sandboxed. Also, you can run an application within the sandbox at the same you are running it outside the sandbox. The complete operating system is not loaded into the sandbox. This reduces the memory required for the sandbox operations.

Applications running in the sandbox can not hijack non-sandboxed programs. Therefore they can not operate outside the sandbox. New files or other created objects have a path assigned by Sandboxie which directs them into the sandboxed folders. Sandboxie prevents any programs running inside the sandbox from loading drivers directly. It also prevents programs from asking a central system component, known as the Service Control Manager, to load drivers on their behalf. In this way, drivers, and more importantly, rootkits, cannot be installed by a sandboxed program. This is one of the features that prevents rootkits from being installed outside the sandbox.

In actual operation, using Sandboxie is very simple. To make it even simpler, there is a short tutorial available on the Sandboxie web site. This can be accessed from within the program the first time you run it or directly from the Sandboxie home page by clicking on the “FAQ & Help” link.

After installation it can be set to load whenever the computer is started. This puts an icon in the system tray. Clicking on this icon brings up the Sandboxie Control Center. This window lists all sandboxed applications and object. When I started it, the window indicated nothing was sandboxed. So, using the menu I selected run an application and then selected Firefox. This changed the list in the window to show Firefox as well as the two RegHive files. With Firefox up, I did my usual web surfing. Along the way I received a message from Sandboxie that a new version was available that I could download. At this point, I really couldn’t tell that anything was different from my previous surfing experience with Firefox. So I went to the Sandboxie page and downloaded the new version. After finishing I closed the Sandboxie Control Center. Then I went looking for the download so I could install it. Well, it didn’t exist anywhere on the hard drive! I had closed Sandboxie without marking the update to be saved! As a result the download was deleted, along with all the other sandboxed files when I closed the Control Center. So I opened the Control Center, restarted Firefox and downloaded the update. This time I

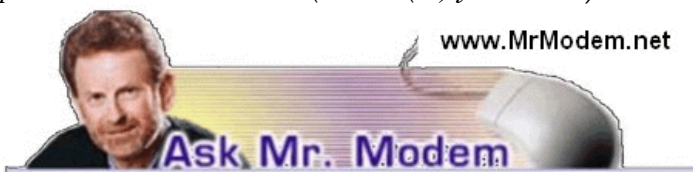
selected it to be saved before I closed the Control Center. Then I was able to install the update.

I should also point out that now I have an icon on the desktop which automatically runs Firefox sandboxed. Sandboxie can be set up to isolate your browser automatically whenever you open it. To do so, add the name of your browser's executable file, such as `firefox.exe` or `iexplore.exe`, to the list of programs Sandboxie always opens in a sandbox. If you don't do this, Sandboxie will not set your browser to open automatically in the sandbox.

As you can tell from these comments, Sandboxie does not require a reboot to start the sandbox process. Sandboxie does sandbox access to files, but not to the complete hard drive. It does sandbox access to registry keys. It also sandboxes access to many other classes of system components, in order to trick the sandboxed program into believing that it isn't being tricked. So you can open and close Sandboxie repeatedly while you are using your computer without having to do any rebooting.

If this discussion has interested you and you would like to take Sandboxie for a test run, the free version can be downloaded from: www.sandboxie.com. This application is free for personal use. However, there is a Pro version available for \$30. If you like the program and can afford it, buy the Pro version. This software is the work of one person, Ronen Tzur, and this payment is his means of support to continue working and improving this software. After some experience in running Sandboxie, I can highly recommend it as an excellent method of protecting your computer from malware.

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. This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (bwsail (at) yahoo.com).



Prevent Scrolling Excel Headings

Q. I am building a large Excel address file and I want to know how I can make the column headings (Name, Address, Email, etc.) appear on each page. Right now they only appear on the first page. Also, isn't there also some way to keep the column headings visible, so they never scroll off the screen? Thanks, Mr. M.

A. Click File > Page Setup, and go to the Sheet tab. In the "Rows to Repeat at Top" field, enter 1:1, assuming your column headings are in Row 1, and click OK. This will ensure that Row 1 is at the top of every printed page.

To keep your headings visible (again, assuming your headings appear in Row 1), click to select cell A2 (yes, A2, not A1), then click Window > Freeze Panes. Once selected, you can scroll through your spreadsheet and your column headings will remain within view at all times.

Q. How can I select the file types that my Windows Media Player will play?

A. Open Windows Media Player (WMP) by going to Start > Programs > Windows Media Player. Click Tools > Options > File Types tab. Select the check box next to the file type(s) that you want to open automatically using WMP, such as .WMA, .WMV, .MP3, MIDI. If you want to use WMP as your exclusive media player, click the Select All button to choose all file types. Click OK to save your changes and exit.

Q. When I visit Web sites using Internet Explorer, a small screen pops up stating a line error has been encountered. It asks if I want to debug it. If I click "No," the pop-up disappears, but it comes back. If I click "Yes," it goes to a debugging page of some type, but I don't know what to do from there. How can I get rid of this?

A. If you disable the debugging function, you won't encounter those pesky pop-ups in the future. The debugging function is intended for programmers and developers, so by disabling it you won't be adversely affecting your computing life. To turn it off, click Tools > Internet Options > Advanced. Scroll down to the Browsing section and remove the check marks beside "Disable script debugging (Internet Explorer)," "Disable script debugging (Other)," and "Display a notification about every script error." Finish up by clicking Apply > OK, close then reopen IE, and you should be all set.

Wanted: Positive Customer Service Experiences

I'm working on an article about the ethereal concept of customer service. Examples of abysmal service abound, but if you have had an outstanding experience with customer service-it need not be related to computing or tech support-tell me about it. Be sure to include the name of the company, what your call (or email) concerned, and what you most appreciated, or what most impressed you, about the service you received.

Published submissions will be edited, so don't be concerned about grammar, punctuation or spelling. If your submission is selected and approved for publication, you will receive a copy of the published work. (What, you were expecting cash?) Please send your experience(s) to me at MrModem@mrmodem.com. Thanks very much.

Mr. Modem's DME (Don't Miss 'Em) Sites of the Month

Little Known Facts Show

This family-friendly site features short stories and vignettes about Americana. The site includes fun facts about American presidents, inventions, silly-but-real laws, amusing town names, and trivia fans without a life can read a new "Little Known Facts" story every day. These stories are similar to Paul Harvey's world-renowned "The Rest of the Story" feature.

www.littleknownfactsshow.com

Plot-O-Matic

Have you ever sat in a movie theater, robotically consuming a \$27 tub of popcorn and thinking to yourself, "I can write a better movie than this drivel"? Judging from what's passing for entertainment these days, you probably could. In fact, it's even easier than you might think. Using the Plot-O-Matic (patent pending), select your characters and the plot elements you would like to include in your movie. When you're satisfied with your choices, click "Lights! Camera! Action!"

<http://tinyurl.com/6n42xd>

Unusual Hotels

As its name implies, this is the place to turn if you're seeking non-traditional hotels. Perhaps you have mole-like tendencies and would like to stay underground, or inside an igloo, in a tree, or even underwater? If so, you'll find the opportunity here. Categories include Art Galleries, Lighthouses, Underground Caves, and even Prisons. Yes, for \$150/night you can stay in a fabulous Turkish Prison. See, dreams do come true! Hotels are rated on a scale ranging from "Different" to "Wow," though I'm surprised there isn't a "Get-me-out-of-here!" category.

www.unusualhotelsoftheworld.com/

For plain-English answers to your questions by email, plus great computing tips, subscribe to Mr. Modem's award-winning newsletter. Subscribe using Promo Code 4022 and receive two free months with your 12-month subscription (60 issues!) To view a sample issue or subscribe, visit www.MrModem.com.

From the DealsGuy

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

Suggested Reading

I'm sure you've heard about some of the innovations that United Parcel Service has created in the interest of saving money, such as calculating their delivery routes with a minimum of left turns. This article will inform you of many other ways they are saving money, some that will surprise you <<http://www.informationweek.com/news/showArticle.jhtml?articleID=212900815>>. Everything you can think of is under scrutiny. However, the most interesting part is further into the article.

Feedback

I certainly had plenty of feedback from my experience with Best Buy. It seems that many others have had a bad experience with Best Buy and wrote to tell me about it. My preference for that type of store was Circuit City, but that has come to an end. I'm sorry to bid them farewell because Circuit City always treated me right.

A Bit About Work

My wife and I have worked some great trade shows lately. One was the Fun Show, which is also called the Coin Show. I sure saw many dollars worth of coins etc. displayed by people from all over the US. Police continually patrolled the show floor and they now have police on horseback roamed the parking lot to prevent any robberies there, which have happened in the past. In fact, there have even been vendors who were followed by robbers to a distant town where they were robbed when they stopped at a motel for the night. Obviously, the robbery was substantial.

Then came the Surf Show, which happens twice a year. It's a large show and draws attendees from the US states with beaches, and from the Caribbean. Fashions make up much of the show, but there are lots of other things to see, not to mention the models (mmmm).

On the heels of the Surf Show came the "Shot Show" which occupied 1.1 million square feet of exhibit area in the West complex of Orange County Convention Center. <<http://www.shotshow.org>>. I saw a shotgun with a price tag of \$100,000 and that booth also had a deal for four assorted shotguns and rifles for only \$400,000. Too bad my Visa limit was too low for that. Those guns with their GOLD triggers would have made a nice gift for my wife's husband. The show had about 25,000 attendees and security was tight with all kinds of guns and knives all over

the place. Most of the attendees I talked to said they were unable to see the entire show in one day. Others said they were back again to keep looking because you always find something you didn't see the first trip through. That is so true of trade shows.

I'll also give you the URL for the IAAPA Attractions Expo <<http://www.iaapa.org>> which is a show we worked in November that is all about amusement park rides and other attractions at carnivals. It's always fun to work it and some of the rides are set up and working right there on the show floor. There is as much as 65 feet of height in certain areas of that building if needed. There were many inflatable attractions this year and lots of food exhibits (Burp).

The Power Gen Show was extremely interesting with everything from small to very large generating systems <<http://www.power-gen.com/index.html>>. Three vendors offered giant windmill generators, GE, Mitsubishi and Vesta with impressive movies illustrating the construction. If I had one of those, I could power the entire neighborhood. You might also be interested in the Electronic House Expo that will be in Orlando in March.

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

How About Repairing That File

DataNumen Inc. has released Advanced Access Repair 2.0. If .MDB files are corrupt or damaged, this powerful repair engine will recover the data with precision. The performance of Advanced Access Repair is improved and supports MS Access 2007 and Windows Vista. If the .MDB files are corrupt or damaged in some way, Access can neither open the files nor recognize any data in them. Advanced Access Repair uses advanced technologies to scan the corrupt or damaged Microsoft Access databases (.MDB files) and recover the data in them as much as possible.

Advanced Access Repair 2.0 is based on a comprehensive understanding of the Access MDB database format. The advanced algorithm of this powerful tool allows you to recover every possible item in the MDB database files because the recovery process does not rely on the structure of the original corrupt or damaged MDB database file. Sometimes the structure is completely damaged and cannot be recognized, but Advanced Access Repair is still able to analyze the raw MDB database file byte by byte and recover most of the data.

Advanced Access Repair 2.0 can successfully repair Microsoft Access 95, 97, 2000, XP, 2003 and 2007 databases, recover the structure and records of the tables in Access databases, or recover MEMO and

OLE fields. It offers numerous features that are not available, or only partially available, in other repair engines. Among those features is support for the new Access 2007 format, batch recovery, command line support, shell integration, and drag & drop support. Advanced Access Repair 2.0 can also recover indexes, auto-number fields and relations, can output repaired MDB files in different formats, and can search for MDB database files on the local computer according to special criteria. Password encrypted Access databases? Recovered; deleted records and tables; no problem.

Advanced Access Repair 2.0 runs under all versions of Microsoft Windows, including Vista, and supports all versions of Microsoft Access including Microsoft Access 2007. A single-user license costs \$299.95 (US). Volume buyers are entitled to discounts. They are offering a 10% discount if you use the code DNC-SGKO-DG when ordering. The code is good through March. Further information on the product, as well as a free trial copy is available from <<http://www.datanumen.com/aar/>>.

Direct download link:

<<http://www.datanumen.com/aar/aar.exe>>

Keep An Eye On That Network

Softinventive Lab, the developer of software for IT Administrators, introduced Total Network Monitor, the program which enables IT Administrator to be continuously informed about every single moment of their network's performance. If there is any error or failure in a network computer's performance, the program immediately alerts you by sending a message to your E-mail, Jabber account or Event log. Total Network Monitor 1.0.1 helps to prevent serious bottlenecks and the program builds a detailed report on the type and time of any failure or error that occurred.

You can check any aspect of each utility, server or file system, HTTP, FTP, SMTP/POP3, IMAP, Event Log, Service State, Registry, and many others at any time. Total Network Monitor allows you to create monitor lists and customize them as much as possible according to your needs. It gives you all the tools for convenient monitoring of your network devices' state and has a number of specific probes checking the remote utilities and server's state. For your convenience all probes are divided into three main groups; Internet, Windows and Miscellaneous. The program enables you to build a demonstrative network map, which is handy in network control.

Total Network Monitor 1.0.1 runs under Windows 2000/XP/2003 Server platforms including Vista, and

costs \$145/112 euro per license for one installation, \$115/89 euro per license for 2 to 5 installations, \$95/73 euro per license for 6 to 10 installations. They offer a 20% discount on request. <info@softinventive.com>

Product page link:

<<http://www.softinventive.com/products/total-network-monitor/>>

Download link:

<<http://www.softinventive.com/downloads/tnm-setup.exe>>

Use This Instead of Print Screen

Here is a suggestion by a reader who preferred not to be mentioned: When you want to save what's on your screen, many use Print Screen to save it to the clipboard. However, you don't always get everything you want, such as the cursor, using that method. Why not try FastStone Capture, which is a freebie. The following is from their Web site: "FastStone Capture 6.3, Shareware (last update: 2008-10-15): A powerful lightweight, yet full featured screen capture tool that allows you to easily capture and annotate anything on the screen including windows, objects, menus, full screen, rectangular/freehand regions, and even scrolling windows web pages. It also allows you to record screen activities and sound into video files."

FastStone also offers other software so see <<http://www.faststone.org/index.htm>> for a description of their various products.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. 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@bellsouth.net>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.

There Is More to Music than the iPod®

by Mike Morris
Editor, Front Range PC Users Group, CO

There is more to music—and more to life—than the iPod. I think I can prove that statement with the words that follow. Please don't misunderstand me. I admire the iPod as a successful product—a success technically and financially—even though I don't have one. However....

I need to start my "proof" by saying that in previous articles that I have written for this newsletter, I made a claim to being an Old Analog Guy (as a reminder, the acronym = OAG and is pronounced "ogre"). It is with that persona that I bring this subject to your attention.

I just completed a catalog of nearly 300 old LP's that belonged to a family member who died last year. And when I say old, I mean some of those LP's have release dates more than 50 years old. Some of the recordings are much older than that. There are many memorable, and even historic, performances recorded on those albums.

A small part of that music has been re-released on CDs. But there is much of that music—almost all Jazz—that you will not currently find in any digital format. So put down your iPod (or one of its imitators) and please listen to what I have to say.

I decided to create a database for this catalog using Microsoft Access®. One significant issue, as you might expect, is just how much information to include in the database. This database is for family use—not for radio station or other broadcast use. I did, however, want to make a record (no pun intended) of whatever information was necessary to properly document the collection. The most significant decision was related to the track (song) names, sequence and times on each side of each LP. Clearly, if I needed to document that information, both the data entry task and complexity of the database were going to be much higher. If the average number of tracks per side is 4 (it is probably higher), and I wanted to include all that information, then I was faced with a data entry task of $4 \times 2 \times 300 = 2400$ entries (plus all the other information I wanted to include).

"No big deal" you say—there are many much much larger databases in the world. You are correct. But remember, I am an OAG (please correctly pronounce that acronym). Therefore I was looking for an "easy" way to complete this task. Credit is due to Ken Campbell of radio station KRFC (more on that in a moment), a local public radio station, for a solution. Ken told me about an online music database called allmusic.com (<http://www.allmusic.com>) (yes, it is spelled with all lower case letters). It turns out there are many online music databases (a Google® search turned up more than 68,000, using the phrase "online music database"). The allmusic.com database was the best for my catalog project for the following reasons:

1. A successful search for an artist will provide an Overview, a Biography, a Discography (a list of all albums by the artist known to the database, with

title, date and label), Songs, Credits, and Charts and Awards.

2. From the discography, one can click on an album and get information (usually) on the album tracks (including times), composer(s), recording date(s), release date, label, format (LP or CD), the label's catalog number, and, for some albums, a review of the album.
3. The search options include artist/group, album, song, classical work.
4. There is substantially more information about the Jazz genre than just a list of names and dates. For example, on the Jazz "home page," there are a number of "Related Essays" on Jazz, including "A Brief History of Jazz."

For a project such as the cataloging of an existing music collection, with LP's that are up to 50 years old, this database is the best choice by far of all of the databases examined or considered. It is the equivalent of an encyclopedia, and the functionality makes searching easy, with related data presented on a single page. The ability to link from a list of albums (discography) to a single album (or CD reissue) provides very efficient searching for a project of this type. That is not to say that it is error free. There are albums not included in the database—the web site makes no claim that it contains every album ever released. There are also tracks missing from some albums (or the track order in the database doesn't match the order on the disk). An album may be in the database, but not in the artist's discography. And, there are numerous problems with release and recording dates. Still, the "pros" far outweigh the "cons."

There is a feature offered by this web site that is unique. Each page (any of the choices listed in item 1 above) has a "Corrections to this entry?" option, allowing the user to submit corrections. Those corrections are then researched for confirmation (if the web site statement is correct) before they are added to the database. That feature was used extensively during the research for this music cataloging project—although not every error or missing item was submitted.

For my project, the search by artist was the most effective. If an album was not listed in the artist's discography, a search by album was the alternate choice. Although the database has many very early jazz albums, there were a few albums in the collection, both old and new—or at least "newer"—by well-known artists that were missing from the allmusic database. So, although not perfect, the allmusic database is an excellent research tool, and you don't

need the iTunes media player (or any other media player) to use it.

The database is not limited to research, however. You can listen to short sound bytes from some tracks, and there are links that allow you to buy selected tracks or albums (correction – CDs).

OK, so your iPod and the iTunes media player are great for listening to (and buying) current and even "relatively" old music. But the iTunes media player is not going to help you—to same extent as the allmusic database will—find classic old Jazz performances (and perhaps classic performances from other genres). And, you must have the iTunes media player installed on your computer before you can do any searching with it.

You may be wondering why I am talking about online databases and why I consider a good online database important to my "proof." Yes, there is a relationship. But before I offer the conclusion, I have several comments on other databases.

Another online database used rarely was Gracenote[®], a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America. Gracenote is used "...for digital media recognition of CDs, digital music files, and streaming audio. With the most comprehensive database of music information in the world, the Gracenote Media Database contains information for more than 80 million tracks and 6 million CDs..." This database is normally linked to media players, such as Winamp[®], to automatically identify music on a CD or from a download. It provides album title (and, in some cases, an image of the album cover), and track names—if you connect through a media player (or other audio/video equipment with the enabling software installed that is connected to the internet).

If you connect to Gracenote directly from a browser (<http://www.gracenote.com/>), the search options are artists, albums, tracks. A successful search on an artist returns a list of albums (a lot less than the allmusic database) released by that artist that are known to the database. It is important to note that the quantity information in the Gracenote advertisement makes an explicit reference to CDs. The album information is similar to that in the allmusic database, except that there are no track times. There are, however, links to the lyrics of some tracks—for those songs that have them. Also the "Buy" buttons are much more prevalent, and much more obvious in the Gracenote database, compared to the allmusic database.

Another online database examined briefly was Rhapsody[®], <http://www.rhapsody.com/home.html>, a service provided by Real Networks.com, better

known for its Real® media player. The company claims to provide “Technology and services that help people enjoy digital entertainment whenever and wherever they want.”

Connect to the Rhapsody website and the first thing you will notice are the annoying animated ads. Get beyond that and the search options are artist, keyword, track, album, composer, video, lyrics, and playlist. If a search for an album is successful, you can, for most albums, get track information by clicking on the album image—but that track information (no times) is very probably going to be from a more current CD release, not from the original LP, depending on how old that original LP is and how popular the album was. However, there is nowhere near the same level of information available from this database, compared to the allmusic database. The Rhapsody database is organized for listening to (or buying) music that is already known to the user, either by song name or by artist (in my opinion). It is not an effective research tool for finding information on old LP’s.

It is not necessary to have the Real player installed in order to search the Rhapsody database.

Now listen up everyone! Here is my reason for talking about music databases:

There is some great old music out there! In all genres. Please don’t get so comfortable with your iPod that you ignore that music. Especially when you have a resource such as the allmusic online database to help you identify it, catalog it, find reviews on it and find some history of it.

I suspect that many of you reading this article (I hope there are many readers) have some of that “great old music” sitting on your shelves or in your cabinets. Or perhaps stored away somewhere. If so, “unstore” it. You will, I am certain, enjoy that music, especially with the added information available from the allmusic database.

And that is what I mean when I say “There Is More to Music than the iPod.”

Here is the additional information I promised on radio station KRFC:

Front Range PC Users Group (FRPCUG) has a partnership with KRFC, 88.9 FM in Fort Collins, CO. KRFC provides “Community powered music, news and entertainment.” For more information, connect to <http://krfcfm.org/>. FRPCUG provides computer maintenance help to KRFC, and, in return, KRFC helps expand the knowledge of FRPCUG activities within the local community. An internet audio stream is available from the KRFC web site.

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Magic Word Brings Email to the Offline World

A review by Gabe Goldberg
Computers and Publishing, Inc.

If you’ve ever wondered how to bring email to the techno-phobe in your life, the answer isn’t Abracadabra, it’s Presto.

If you’re reading this online, you own or have access to a computer. But you likely have friends or relatives—perhaps elderly, budget-restricted, technophobic—who don’t. So they’re not in close touch and can’t share online family or community activities.

Presto <<http://www.presto.com>> is a combination color inkjet printer and paid Web-based service which allows people without computers to receive email, including attachments.

Setting it up is simple: after purchasing the device, someone with just a bit of tech savvy creates the account, picks an email address (such as gabeg99@presto.com), and lists people allowed to send email to the address. At specified times of day, the printer dials a toll-free telephone number, downloads accumulated email, and prints it.

With only two controls—Volume and Stop—it’s easy to operate. It plugs directly into a telephone jack and doesn’t need a separate phone line or jack or even a splitter, since an existing telephone or accessory (answering machine or Caller ID device) can plug into it, daisy-chain style.

Presto is ideal for letting seniors receive email from children, grandchildren, friends, former colleagues, military buddies, etc. And it’s useful when businesses request customer email addresses to conduct or simplify transactions. It handles pictures and many attachment formats nicely, printing them as if it was a FAX machine. So it allows sharing any online or computer content as PDF files such as maps and directions, travel itineraries, Web pages, spreadsheets with financial or family contact information.

Simple steps authorize new people to send email, and when ink runs low, the printer is smart enough to either alert the person who set up the account or automatically order new cartridges.

After failing for a dozen years to excite my in-laws about email—they steadfastly resisted being online—my retired Navy father-in-law fell in love with a Presto I loaned him, discovering that it let him hear from his old Navy buddies around the world.

And receiving color pictures of the grandchildren sealed the deal.

The printer costs \$150 or less (always comparison shop online!) and the service costs \$12.50/month with yearly subscription. The only thing missing is the printer downloading paper and ink through the phone line—but that would need real magic!

This article first appeared on the Tiptet Web site, <www.tiptet.com> and is copyrighted by the author, Gabriel Goldberg. All rights are reserved; it may be reproduced, downloaded, or disseminated, for single use, or by nonprofit organizations for educational purposes, with attribution to Tiptet and the author. It should be unchanged and this paragraph must be included. Please e-mail the author at tiptet@gabegold.com when you use it, or for permission to excerpt or condense. Tiptet's free newsletter provides weekly computer tips.

Significant Bits

by Sean N. Henderson
VP, Marketing & Public Relations,
Danbury Area Computer Society, CT

On Software Installations

I received as a Christmas gift Ahead's Nero 9—a CD/DVD burning suite with some authoring and backup tools as well. I have a combination of software pieces already on my laptop that in some way do some or all of what Nero 9 claims it can do. However, the promise of having all these tasks integrated into a single package seemed appealing, so I decided I'd give it try. I had also recently reinstalled my copy of Nero 6 on my downstairs PC and was pleasantly reminded how much better I liked Nero 6's interface, so this was another push to try Nero 9.

The Nero 9 installation took 45 minutes on my laptop. One colleague mentioned that maybe I should have tried the install with my antivirus software turned off to speed up the process. Except for operating systems, I'm curious why a software package would take 45 minutes to install in this day-and-age of high-speed processors and drives.

Nero 9 is much more involved than Nero 6 and similar versions, where Nero 9 includes media players, some authoring tools, and looks like it will replace the need for other software items. In my case, my laptop had separate programs already for viewing DVDs and authoring DVDs/VCDs.

Remember when installing any software, and especially anything that's a "suite" to make a restore point first and backup your system. I'd also recommend if the install left some installation related files, to keep those around, since some software titles need the leftover installation files to uninstall themselves.

First impressions of Nero 9 are that it will extensively "hook" into the Desktop environment, changing file extension associations, and adding context-menu options. For myself, I'm more fond of applications that do not touch the registry and are "portable" in nature, so Nero 9 has already a bad score in my book before I've even done anything with it yet. While the installer gives options for which components and templates to install, there is no expert mode to prevent Nero 9 from messing with the file extensions. Also, Nero 9 claims some file extensions that are common or else used by another application.

Opera Mini and Palm TX Part II

You'll recall I had mentioned previously about using Opera Mini on my Palm TX. After a month or so of usage, I'm finding that it works okay most of the time, but it is not really optimized for different networks. In one instance I had to delete all the scanned entries for other Wi-Fi hotspots so that it would stop trying to logon to my distant and not present work network. So currently, I only use Opera Mini on my TX for home use, and the Blazer otherwise. Be forewarned, having installed the particular Java layer and Opera Mini, my Palm TX has tended to crash more when using Opera Mini or Blazer.

Editing Just About Anything

Something I find somewhat irritating when trying to help another computer user with a problem or task is when the person really has not taken the time to learn their software or operating system from a navigational perspective. I can tell they do not know the software well if they do not use the keyboard and/or keyboard shortcuts. (These keyboard shortcuts are also referred to as "hot keys" or "key combinations", and so on.) This is where the person helping, such as myself, says, "Please get out of your chair and let me drive." If you use a computer and do not know your hot keys, read on.

The mouse and graphic desktop are great at giving people quick access to files and a shorter learning curve for applications. However, if someone's primary way to interact with a computer is by way of the mouse, then they may likely take longer to do a task, especially spreadsheet work. The reality is that people are capable of typing (keyboarding?) faster than they can point-and-click (or speak), menu diving or clicking around the screen at teeny-tiny hieroglyphs that may-or-may-not be a link.

A quick way to learn all the key combinations for your desktop and applications is to go cold-turkey and

simply to take the mouse off of the computer, have a list of shortcuts and go from there. Here are some hot keys in Windows XP that are pretty common to help get you going. (Check your manuals and or on-line for your particular desktop, application, and operating system if different.)

- Ctrl-Esc Start Menu
- Alt+F4 Close window, application, or Windows itself
- F6 Select or highlight whatever is in the location field, if present (browsers, directories)
- F1 Show help
- Ctrl-F1 Hide help
- F2 Rename a file (Windows and many applications using the standard open file dialog)
- Ctrl-c Copy selected area into the 'Clipboard' aka the buffer
- Ctrl-v Paste from the Clipboard (buffer)
- Ctrl-z Undo last action

Links

Keyboard Shortcuts for XP

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/301583>

Excel 2003 Keyboard Shortcuts

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel/HP052037811033.aspx>

Sean N. Henderson is regular contributor to DACS.doc. More information at <http://seannhenderson.net/dacs.html>. This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author.

Editor's finds:

University of the People will open its virtual doors in April 2009. http://uopeople.com/site/index.asp?depart_id=104898

<http://lifelhacker.com/5144665/yourfonts-turns-your-handwriting-into-a-personalized-font> [free and fun]

Society News

Minutes from Feb. Planning Meeting

by Steve Staub, President.

We started the meeting at 7:00 pm. Present were Bob Avery, Tony Dellelo, Arpad Kovacs, Mike Lavelle, Sally Springett, and Steve Staub.

The first topic was a review the January general meeting. We all agreed that we had an excellent presentation. We then proceeded to make sure everything is in order for February meeting. We then discussed our March meeting presentation which is "Exploring MAC Possibilities." Our presenter is Sound Bite Steve Rea. Everything looks good. We talked about this month's newsletter printing. Everything should be ready to go by Feb. 14th.

The treasury looks good. Club member Dennis MacMahon is helping us get the necessary paper in line because now all not-for-profit groups have to file a federal tax form 990N.

We briefly touched on our picnic which will be in August. We have a cabin, so were ahead of the game this year.

The last item we covered is every year we have to have election of officers in May. Our by laws state we need a nominating committee. This committee will need to fill the following positions with either current or new officers. The following offices need to be covered; President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and one member at large. Please volunteer for the nominating committee.

Program Meeting

Extended Help's Half Hour

Led by: Arpad Kovacs

Recorded by Jan Rothfuss

Q: A member has a problem with a Linux installation.

A: It was suggested that he try the installation from the package manager

Q: Does anyone have any experience with MagicJack – telephone?

A: This is a legitimate software but no other member is using it. Vonage is still the best and includes technical support. Arpad prefers Skype – 2 cents per minute. An issue is that there is no return phone number capability. Skype can route calls to your cell phone, too. You set up an account with them and purchase minutes using PayPal or using calling cards that can be purchased at Walmart.

Q: One member bought a new router. After installation, he wanted to add security. The router is a PEW631BRP – Trend Network. He used Road Runner.

A: 192.168.0.100 may be the IP address to connect. He might have to open up a command window and use ipconfig to establish.

Q: On XP in IE 7, he was able to see recent sites visited. Can he do this in Vista?

A: You may need to click on the Vista favorites tool bar. Mozilla Firefox has a similar feature. Our current club secretary will check things out while at work and report back if she discovers anything.

Q: Vista 64 bit does not allow the use of a sandbox – an area that holds vermin and will be cleared out as you close down IE.

A: It is available for free as a plugin. But will not work with XP SP3 either.

Q: How can you tell whether you are running in 64 bits?

A: You need to check your system specs.

Q: When using RoadRunner email account, he gets a series of 1kb files, maybe 100 per day. Is it possible to block these out?

A: This is a spam. Do not click on them. Usually the mail has been scrubbed before it gets to you, hence the size. A message of "Virus has been removed" will appear. Frontier does a similar thing.

Q: A general question to all: What is everyone's major computer gripe? Answers will be solicited after the break.

Q: There was a question about a side bar that runs under Vista.

A: Arpad demonstrated the use of a sidebar that he has created using applets that monitor CPU. There is a Visa sidebar applet that allows you to add more gadgets as already installed on your computer. You can add more gadgets online, too as found under the Microsoft site. You can add news headlines, eBay, stock quotes, email recent arrivals. Arpos admits that this is one feature from Vista that he likes.

Q: A member had an HP computer. It started with 60 gig and now has tried 160. It is now formatted for 127 gigs. After 6 months of use, it now is giving him trouble. Are some of the files getting lost in this 30+ gig unused space?

A: The unused segment is not formatted so files cannot be placed there. You should be able to partition the drive into segments so that all available capacity can be used. But you do need to partition it using a machine that can accept the full size.

Q: What is your major gripe with computers?

A: Start-up Time. There is a function called "Express Gate" that assists the process using a hidden partition. This promises 6 second from startup to an open browser. A file is added to your root directory. Netbooks laptops have startup times of 10 seconds. \$199 at Best Buy. There may also be a program that causes a delay against your startup files. Those that are extras are delayed. You can also use the basic StartUp Manager to remove programs that you do not want to have come up automatically. You would

then launch them manually. StartUP CPL is a program that will install a control panel that will go directly to the startup programs.

Q: How can you tell which programs you need?

A: Under www.blackviper.com.winXP/servicecfg.htm is a service to chose the best items, allowing you to scale down those that are not needed.

Q: A member has been trying to copy audio records into files. He is running XP. He has tried using Audacity. When he tries, his system crashes.

A: Try downloading the alternate file—table or beta version. You may be able to contact the speaker who came to our meeting in January. He did say that 'noise' can be an issue. Call SoundBytes on a Sunday morning.

Q: Thunderbird mail is giving him trouble. There were messages in the queue one night but they disappeared when he went back the next morning.

A: Perhaps they were moved to an archive. You may need to check your other computers. The mystery remained unsolved.

Q: If you have an application and the original disk, how much risk is there if you reinstall?

A: A repair will usually replace all the files, placing the software back to its original image. You will want to save any personalized contents before starting the repair or reinstall.

Q: One member has an old Photoshop where the original CD no longer is usable. Can it be recovered from his hard drive so that he can keep a copy if needed?

A: PhotoShop 5.0 can be copied and pasted to a CD or flash drive.

Q: Steve has an HP printer that he replaced. He added the new driver and it did not work. Tony rescued him by finding a hidden driver. This was causing a conflict. Once found, all is well. Is this a common problem?

A: One other member indicated that he had a similar problem. He needed to take everything out and reinstall.

Q: Tony would like to virtualize an instance of Linux on his Windows machine.

A: Microsoft Virtualpc is a free tool that can be used. Version 2007 SP1 will work on most windows pcs. VirtualBox will work if starting with Linux and creating a virtual windows instance.

Q: Arpad demonstrated the creation of the virtual machine. He also then loaded DSL—arn Small Linux from a flash drive that one of the members had with him. Shazam!

Q: Arpad also has some MacIntosh emulators. He demonstrated two of them, showing that they came

up as if running a Mac either version 5 or version 9.
A third one emulates a G4.

