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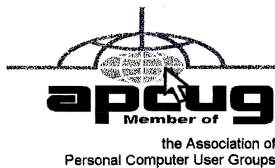
January 2011

Next Meeting
Tuesday, January 11

Digital Photography Travelogue
with Dave Thompson

Contents

Virus Infection? Don't Buy a New Computer	Leo Notenboom	1
Microsoft Rolls Out "SkyDrive"	Ira Wilsker	3
Nothing is Forever	Harry McCracken	5
Stream Media Over the Internet	Kim Komando	7
What is a Document Management System?	Bob Rankin	7
Organize, Organize, Organize	Ron Hirsch	9
Excel Tips	Sharon Parq Associates	12
More Free Online TV but Be Careful	Ira Wilsker	16
Free Comprehensive Security Suite	Ira Wilsker	18
Ask Mr. Modem		21
Miscellany		22
Society News		23
The Lighter Side		24



Virus Infection?

Don't Buy a New Computer Because of It

by Leo Notenboom

If you've never been infected with a computer virus, it is likely you know someone who has. They are real, nasty threats that can destroy information on your computer. You might "catch" them by downloading illegal files, opening a bad attachment, or surprisingly enough, clicking on bogus browser pop ups that warn you've been infected. It can be a frustrating and time consuming process to get the viruses removed.

However, you should never have to buy a new computer because of virus infections.

This "solution" occurs often enough that it's important to clear up the confusion by examining the difference between hardware and software.

Hardware are physical things you can touch, see, and feel. This includes your computer, monitor, or hard drive, for example.

On the other hand, software is simply data: a large collection of ones and zeroes stored on magnetic, electronic or optical media. Software can include Windows, your applications, and anything else stored on your computer...including viruses.

Viruses wreck havoc and cause your computer to misbehave; however, they are really nothing more than data. And, data can be replaced without replacing your computer.

Look at it this way. You probably wouldn't replace your toaster if your bread was moldy. You'd likely throw away the bread, clean the toaster and start with new fresh bread. In the same way, you can get rid of the "bad software," clean your software and start over. This solution works even after the worst malware infection.

Instead of throwing away the parts, here are a few better options for handling an infected machine.

Prevention: The smartest solution is of course to never become infected in the first place. Effective prevention methods may include installing, and updating, anti-virus software, securing online mobile connections, and not falling for e-mail phishing scams. Also, avoid downloading software from places known for malware, such as illegal file sharing sites.

Attempt to Clean it: If your computer does get infected, the next step is to clean it by scanning with your anti-virus program, and other tools until they tell you that everything is gone. You may have to scan several times before this happens. Unfortunately, cleaning cannot guarantee your computer is virus free.

Start Over: Erasing everything and starting over is the only way to be 100% certain you've removed all traces of the infection. This requires backing up everything, erasing the hard disk, and then reinstalling Windows and all your applications from scratch and selectively restoring your data files from your back up. This process takes the most work, which is why it is preferable to focus on prevention and avoid this step in the first place. But, it is the best solution.

Remember, computer viruses are an active threat and if you take precautions, you never need to worry about getting or removing them. However, if you do become infected, buying a new machine is never a step you need to take.

Get more free tech help and advice from Leo Notenboom by visiting <http://ask-leo.com> With over 30 years of industry experience, including an 18 year career as a software engineer with Microsoft, Leo gives real answers to real questions from ordinary computer users at Ask Leo! Subscribe to Leo's weekly newsletter now and receive a free ebook: "Internet Safety – Keeping Your Computer Safe on the Internet," a collection of steps, tools and concepts you need to know to keep your computer and your information safe. Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Leo_Notenboom

Microsoft Rolls Out "SkyDrive" Online Office Apps and Storage

by Ira Wilsker

It is obvious that there is some heavy competition between Microsoft and Google in the online document market. About a year ago I wrote about the services offered by Google Docs (docs.google.com), which includes free online document creation and editing, along with online storage and collaboration. Microsoft has also been providing a somewhat similar service, originally with its Office Live Workspace (beta), but now with its enhanced and upgraded SkyDrive service, which is also free (explore.live.com/windows-live-skydrive). While the office components in Google Docs are generally compatible with Microsoft Office, Microsoft's SkyDrive provides a free online version of Office. Since SkyDrive is online, it is accessible from anywhere there is an internet connection, and works with most browsers; I tried it on Firefox and Internet Explorer, and it worked flawlessly on both browsers. SkyDrive is platform independent, and works equally well on a PC and a MAC, or any other operating system with a compatible browser and internet access. Documents can be "collaborated" and edited or shared with others, even if the other users do not have Microsoft Office. Microsoft SkyDrive offers 25MB of free storage, an adequate if not generous amount of storage space for almost all users. SkyDrive requires registration, which is free; registered users of most other online Microsoft products, such as the other Microsoft Live services, Hotmail or Messenger can use their existing usernames and passwords on the SkyDrive service.

One of the primary features is the "Office Web Apps for SkyDrive," which includes online versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote. Clicking on the "Office" link will open up the basic Office App page, where the desired application can be opened. The first window for all of the apps is very simple, where the user is asked to enter the name of the document. I started typing this column on the online Office Word App, and the screen was almost identical to the desktop version of Word. Anyone who can use Word, or another similar word processor, will find the online Word app familiar and easy to use; almost all of the features, commands, controls, and features of the desktop version are available in the free online version of Word. In terms of functionality, I could not find any significant differences between the web and desktop versions of Word. The user can choose to save the file on the SkyDrive servers (the

default), print, and share the document. Under the “Share” option, others can be invited to view or edit the document, all under the control of the original user.

As with Word, the online Excel App has the same look and feel as the desktop version of Excel. To open a new workbook, the clean opening screen asks the user for a file name, and then the workbook opens. Once data is entered, there is no “Save” button, as the Excel App continuously saves the workbook as it is produced. The user also has the option to “Save As” and save the workbook under another name. Unless explicitly downloaded to the computer, all of the workbooks are saved to the SkyDrive servers. Workbooks can be selectively shared with others, while the others can be granted access only to view the workbook, or edit it; this is the heart of online document collaboration.

I frequently do PowerPoint presentations, and the SkyDrive PowerPoint app offers the ability to create, edit, store, and show a PowerPoint presentation from anywhere there is internet access. When opened, the PowerPoint app has the same look and feel of the desktop version, and uses the same command set. As with Excel, there is no “Save” button, as the presentations are automatically saved as they are created. One interesting feature is that when a PowerPoint presentation is shown (“View – Slide Show”) it opens in a browser pop-up window, so the user must allow browser pop-ups from the application in order for the slide show to be viewed. If connected to a projector, the output looks the same as if it was from a desktop version of PowerPoint. As with all of the other Office online apps, the user can choose to share the file with others, and selectively allow others to edit the file. Since Microsoft provides 25MB of free storage, SkyDrive is a practical place to store presentations; if for some reason the presentation must be shown from a computer lacking Office, the SkyDrive file can be shown, as long as there is internet access.

Microsoft OneNote is hard to explain, but basically both the desktop and SkyDrive App versions are both note-taking utilities. OneNote can easily organize any notes that are taken, and would be useful in a classroom, organizational, or professional environment where notes are taken. OneNote looks like a simplified version of Word, but allows the user to “flag” important points, or quickly search for desired terms or phrases. OneNote can incorporate images, web pages, and video, and can itself be incorporated into Word or PowerPoint. A few of my students use OneNote to share class notes during my lectures, ensuring that each of them has a comprehensive set of notes for test reviews. As with the other Office apps, it can be selectively shared with and edited by others. As with some of the other apps, there is no “Save” button as the information is saved to SkyDrive in real-time.

I have several students who do not have Microsoft Office on their personal computers, but need to be able to access Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote; SkyDrive is a free alternative to Microsoft Office, provided that the student has internet access. For the frequent times when several of us must work together (there is that “collaboration” term again) on an Office file, SkyDrive could be the appropriate utility that we could all share, giving us secure and controlled access to our files. For those who have the desktop version of Office 2010, there is a direct and transparent online connection with SkyDrive, allowing files to be saved on SkyDrive directly from

the desktop Office. The SkyDrive files can be selectively shared with anyone on Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, AOL Mail, Hyves, Gmail, Outlook, other Windows Live users, and anyone else with an email address. For security and privacy reasons, access is limited to only those authorized by the user, and that degree of access is also under the control of the original user.

I found SkyDrive and its Office Apps to be every bit as useful as their desktop counterparts, with the bonus of secure online storage of files. Some of us have used SkyDrive and its apps to work together on producing Word documents and PowerPoint presentations, without the need to physically swap files between us. SkyDrive and its Office Apps would be very worthwhile for any computer user with internet access.

WEBSITES:

<http://explore.live.com/windows-live-skydrive>

<http://docs.google.com>

Nothing is Forever

by Harry McCracken

I can tell you when I bought my first computer. (1982—it was an Atari 400 with a tape drive, which I bought at a Service Merchandise in New Hampshire.) I can tell you when I got my first VCR (1985—a cheesy Sharp model with a wired remote; I think I bought it at the late, lamented Boston electronics retailer Lechmere). Same thing for cell phones (a Nokia I still miss), MP3 players, and all sorts of other gadgets.

Countless technology products have meant a lot to me. Few have meant a lot for more than a few years, though—they tend to either break or be rendered obsolete by something even more exciting. And even entire classes of products which I thought I couldn't live without eventually become dispensable.

Herewith, a few categories of gear I've owned, and my best guess as to whether I'm done with them yet.

Laptops. I suppose the day may come when I use some seventh-generation iPad or Android tablet as my only general-purpose computing device. In the short term, though, I expect to continue on buying MacBooks and Windows notebooks as my primary machines.

Desktop PCs. I bought my last one right before Windows Vista came out. Unless I unexpectedly take a job that requires me to sit in one place all day long, I don't expect to buy a desktop computer ever again—it would be sort of like buying a bicycle without any wheels.

Computer monitors. I have a perfectly pleasant 23" Samsung widescreen display, but it sits unused; I've just gotten used to computing anywhere and everywhere rather than at a desk. (I do assume that I'll eventually buy multipurpose "displays" that are both TV sets and computer monitors in one handy-dandy device.)

Mice. On the rare occasion when I'm seated at a desktop, I like using a trackball. But it's been years since I've bought one, and even longer since I've bought a mouse. These days, when I close my eyes and think "pointing device," what I see is a touchpad.

Printers. I have an HP all-in-one (the first and only all-in-one I've ever owned). I'm in no rush to replace it, but I assume I will at some point. Less clear: Will I still want to print out stuff on dead trees in, say, twenty years?

Networking routers. I have a two-year-old Wireless-N one sitting next to my cable modem. It's likely to keep on being perfectly useful for several years to come, but I expect that some technical development will eventually lead me to upgrade.

HDTVs. I've owned a flatscreen for three years, and while I hope to keep on watching it for years to come—I look at it more like a car than a PC—I'm sure it's not my last TV set.

Cell phones. I expect to purchase many of them—too many, probably—over the next few decades. I'm having trouble coming up with any scenario which would render them obsolete.

MP3 players. I owned and loved a bunch of them over the years, from the original Rio PMP300 to the Creative Nomad Jukebox to too many iPods to count. But with the possible exception of devices I might purchase to review, I'm pretty confident I'll never buy another MP3 player that isn't also a smartphone.

Digital cameras. It's possible my new Canon PowerShot S95 is the last point-and-shoot I'll ever buy, but I don't think it's likely, unless some unexpected technological breakthrough leads to spectacular smartphone cameras.

Video cameras. I bought a Flip a couple of years ago—after having owned various other video cameras dating back to the days of 8mm tapes—but wouldn't do it again. For me, video capture is a feature built into phones and still cameras, not a product category.

DVD players. I last bought a standalone one a couple of years ago—a midget-sized unit that fit into my bulging entertainment center. I only see myself buying another if this one conks out and I still have DVDs I want to watch. But I bet I'll acquire more devices with DVD drives or burners built in—they're kind of like floppy drives.

VCRs. I picked up one just recently! It's a combo unit that lets me burn stuff from VHS onto DVD. In other words, it's designed to help me leave the world of tape behind. If I find the time to dupe my tapes, this might be my last VCR, after a quarter-century of owning them.

Audio cassette decks. Can't tell you when I last bought one; don't have one in the house; can't imagine why I'd buy another, except maybe to digitize a unique tape or two. (I interviewed the Car Talk guys years ago, and the tape is around here somewhere...)

LP turntables. I bought one of those ION USB turntables last year, but haven't had time to play with it much. I will, though: In fact, I still buy the occasional collectible LP. But I'd only buy another turntable if this one croaked—and maybe not even then.

FM radios. I picked up a nice Boston Acoustics clock radio around three years ago—but rarely use it these days. If it turns out it's the last FM radio I ever buy—not counting ones that come with automobiles wrapped around them—I wouldn't be the least bit surprised.

Analog wristwatches. The one I wear every day is older than I am—and it still looks good and keeps excellent time. But I'm sure I haven't bought my last one; I'll probably still wear a good old fashioned watch long after I've lost interest in neatly every type of gizmo that's a big deal at the moment.

What major technology products do you think have reached the end of the line—at least for you? Drop me a line at harry@technologizer.com and let me know. And see you at Technologizer.

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Stream Media over the Internet

by Kim Komando

You probably have videos, pictures and music on your home computer. That's nice. But you probably want to access this content from other places. For example, you may want to watch home movies on your laptop when you're traveling. Or maybe you want to view your photos from your cell phone.

In that case, Orb may be the solution you need. This program streams your media over the Internet. And it uses a secure connection.

Using a laptop, you'll get full access to your media. You can also access your media from your cell phone. It must have a media player if you want to watch videos.

Orb can do more. You can stream live television via Orb. That means you can watch your programming wherever you go. You can also use it to record television programs-remotely!

Orb will also let you view your media files on your television. All you need is a Wii, an Xbox 360, or a PlayStation3.

Orb will even let you monitor your home from afar. Just connect a compatible Webcam to your computer. Orb will send you a text or e-mail alert if motion is detected. Or, log on to see what's going on at home.

Cost: Free

Systems: Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, and Mac OSX

Locally you can hear Kim's program on WHAM 1180. To subscribe to Kim's newsletters go to: <http://www.komando.com/newsletters/>

What is a Document Management System?

by Bob Rankin

Document Management Systems A document management system (DMS) is a combination of software and hardware used to track, store, and retrieve electronic documents and digital images of paper documents. A typical DMS has several components and functions. Document capture is the process of scanning a physical document into a digital form. Metadata is usually added to a captured document to describe its content and define key words that will be used to find it again. Integration of documents with other applications allows a word processor, for example,

to locate a document in the DMS, import it into the current document, and save the new version under a different name.

OCR (optical character recognition) is the process of scanning a physical document's handwritten or typewritten text and converting its characters into digital text. OCR enables conversion of many mounds of paper into compact text files on a hard drive, without the tedious task of re-typing it all. In digital form, the text can also be indexed and searched, reformatted with word processing or other types of software, and shared among many users simultaneously. OCR software such as PaperPort and OmniPage (both from Nuance Communications) are highly accurate and fast at scanning standard fonts in English.



Handwritten text still presents challenges for OCR technology.

Some desktop scanners can scan documents for digital storage, and use OCR to convert them to searchable PDF documents. The Fujitsu ScanSnap is a popular example, used in many homes and offices. Scanners with OCR capability are especially useful for lawyers, accountants, and other professional services that tend to deal in large amounts of paperwork.

Digital signatures may be required in a regulated industry such as law, real estate, or medicine to verify the identities of every person who handled or altered a digital document. A digital signature may include a graphic image of the signatory's actual signature, or it may be an encrypted certificate that can be inserted into a document only by the owner who knows its password. See my related article on Digital Signatures to learn more about how they work.

Content Management Systems

Web content management is vital to most enterprises these days. The thing about Web content is that it's fluid; a Web page can change at the whim of a programmer or depending on the identity, input, and preferences of a user. Earlier versions may be lost unless they are archived. Web content management systems include blog software such as Wordpress and Joomla. It can also be more sophisticated software that integrates OCR, paper document storage systems, retrieval and distribution services. You can read my article Content Management Systems for examples of solutions for both non-technical and more tech savvy users.

Document management companies include Xerox, Belwo, Infushui, and other makers of document scanning, printing, and OCR equipment. Many smaller firms specialize in the integration of hardware and software from various companies and the customization of a DMS to a company's specific needs.

Then there are firms which specialize in storing and destroying physical documents. Tax records, medical records, legal paperwork, government records of all kinds must be preserved safely for years, or indefinitely. Document storage services provide climate-controlled, disaster-proof storage facilities for such documents and the ability to locate and retrieve a particular piece of paper quickly. At the end of the required storage period, these firms fulfill legal requirements for the confidential and complete shredding and disposal of documents.

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ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE, ORGANIZE!

by Ron Hirsch

Boca Raton Computer Society , FL

This article is aimed at those readers who always promise themselves that they are going to get organized, especially in the area of their computers. I know that most people have CD's, notes, and manuals scattered all over the place. Do you qualify? If so, this article may be of interest to you. It is not just aimed at your computer activities, but at any activity that accumulates lots of pieces of notes, and printed material, and other items.

I tend to be an "over organizer." And often I'm criticized for being too neat and organized. Doing a good job of organizing can take a fair amount of time. But the time saved when trying to find something may well be a bigger number than the time it took to organize things in the first place.

On Taking Notes in General

We all have occasion to take notes, make notes to ourselves, and often scribble down things while we're on the phone. I personally am online, or on the phone, often to a hardware or software company, trying to fathom the idiosyncracies of some bug, or problem. And, I'm usually taking some notes on things, or printing out pieces of pages. And these days, I visit many places on the Internet, where there are text files etc., which can be downloaded with lots of good information.

The average desk is strewn with bits of paper, corners of magazines, and just about anything that accepts pen or pencil scribbling. Often the pieces get lost, and more often they get thrown out. And, a good part of the time, we can't read what we wrote, because there wasn't enough room on the scrap used, and the "shorthand" is now unreadable. And more often than not, such material gets "filed" in a shoe box or the like, and totally disorganized.

Well, I solved the problem many years ago. I bought a package of spiral notebooks. Anytime I have to take notes, I grab the appropriate notebook, and put everything down in it. I have plenty of room on the page(s), so I don't have to cram things in. I date the top of the page, and since it is all bound together, I can't easily lose it. This makes for an excellent record, with the ability to go back in time to retrieve old notes. Furthermore, it also allows you to "forget" important details, since you can now refresh your memory, needing only the approximate time period involved. Having it

in a spiral notebook is important. The pages stay in chronological order, they won't get lost as with a looseleaf notebook, and the spiral binding is easy to keep open at the desired page.

By now, you might be saying – “big deal – we need someone to tell us how to keep notes.” Well, I have my notebooks going back for 12 years or so, and they come in very handy. I now keep several, one for each desktop computer stuff, and a separate one for household stuff, and actually any major situation or project. When we were putting on the addition to our home in Boca, I had a special one just for that also. It was so helpful, and had so much info recorded, that I guarded that notebook with my life.

And Now an Additional Approach - a Looseleaf Notebook

I know that just said above that a spiral notebook is best, and that is so for keeping notes et al. But, there are times when we all have documents and papers applicable to a given subject, and these, are already printed out so what should we do with them? In the distant past, I had a whole library of looseleaf notebook with the index separators, and I used to laboriously print out small labels to slip into the tabs, with the subject neatly printed out there. This was back in my early computer days, when I assumed that when one had a given program, one used that for life. Of course that was very naive.

After adding more and more software, and obsoleting older software regularly, I got tired of having to change all the labels in the tabs, and came up with a better solution. I used A to Z letters in the tabs. And, I made up a bunch of such looseleaf notebooks, and numbered them from 1 to 10. On the first notebook, I generated an index page, and slipped it into the clear window on the front cover of the notebook. This page lists the description of the stored documents, and their location, such as 2B or 5H – for all the notebooks. When that page became full, I added more pages, and just kept them in loose leaf #1, inside the front cover. I generated the index page in *WordPerfect*, but *Word* or any text editor is fine. I sorted the list alphabetically, and printed it out.

When I have occasion to add in new items, I pencil them and their location onto the index page using the blank area at the end of the index. And, I remove old obsolete items by drawing a line through them. Then periodically, I edit the index page in the computer, resort it, and print out a new copy. When a particular subject has a fair number of pages, it gets its own location, such as 7F. But there are many items that are a single page, so I let them share a common location. After all, when referring to one of 5 single page items in a single location, it is quite easy to find the proper page out of the 5 that are there.

CD and Disc Management

I ended up using a similar approach here. In years past, I used the 3½” and 5¼” disc storage box, and printed specific labels for each program's tab. This used lots of dividers so that each program could have its own home. Back then, most programs used floppies, and several floppies were the order of the day. These days, nothing comes on floppies anymore – it's all CD's and DVD's. So, I got to reuse all the desktop storage cases I had for my 5¼” floppy discs remember them, they really were “floppy,” but they

are perfect for CD's and DVD's. But, I still have a case with some ancient 3½" floppies, as there are some 3½" floppies from the distant past that I want to keep.

I now label the case dividers alphabetically. This is a one-time labeling job. I store the program and other CD's in one of the sections. I have about 8 such storage units. I generated an index like I did for the loose leaf files above. Each storage box is numbered from 1-8, and typically has about 5-6 sections in it. Of course, each section can handle a number of CD's, and many more when they are not in a jewel case. Most companies don't supply their CD's in hard cases, but use the small envelopes with the see through window on the front.

So, the index ID's go from 1A to 8E. And, I publish this index, which is 4-5 pages, and bind it using a GBC plastic comb. As discs are added or removed, I make pencil notes at the end of the printed list. I periodically update the list on my computer, and print out a new copy.

One Other CD Approach

Various of the CD's that I have are used regularly, as they have data or whatever on them, and may be needed when a program is run. For this, and especially when the CD is in a jewel case, I have a number of CD cases, which are widely sold, and have 12-15 slots in them for jewel cases. They will also hold the thin cases, where 2 fit into the same slot. The regular jewel cases generally are labeled on the "spine," and can be identified when in the CD rack.

NOTE: These days, with the very large hard drives that are around, many programs which would normally require the data CD to be present when the program is run, offer another option. During the install, if you elect a "custom" install, you' can tell the program to install all the CD data on the hard drive. This makes the program run much faster, and removes the need for the CD(s) each time the program is run. I have done this with *DeLormes Street Atlas*, .and *Hallmarks Card Studio Deluxe*. The *Card Studio* used about 1.5 GB hard drive space to store the data, but with the many hundreds of GBs I have available, this was no problem.

Here's a Very Important One

These days, many of the programs we use are downloaded, and then installed. There's no CD/DVD or floppy disc as of years ago. After the program is installed, most people lose track of the install file, or delete it completely. And there are often downloaded instructions, manuals, et al, which also tend to get lost in the mist as time goes on. And, when the program is a paid download, there is often a registration/activation key that is given to the purchaser, which is needed to keep the program functioning.

I have a good system to store all this information and keep it available for future use. I set up a folder, on a drive other than my C drive, which I call "Program Archives." And in that main folder, I create a separate folder, which has the name of the program which will be stored there. And as new versions may arrive, or patches be issued, I keep them all in the appropriate folder. And furthermore, I keep copies of that main "Programs Folder" folder in several other places, just for emergencies.

With all the material saved, whenever I need to reinstall that software, recover from a hard drive crash, or just want to review the PDF manual, I have it all at my fingertips. Believe it or not, the size of that main folder on my E drive is about 5 GB! Having this material quickly available to me has saved my butt on numerous occasions.

One unusual case involved a program I love, and use often from a company that was no longer around. So if I didn't have the install file, and the registration key on file, that would be the end of that program.

Here's another related tip. There have been several occasions when the CD/DVD for an important program, such as *Photoshop* just won't function properly during the install. For some strange reason, *Photoshop* has acted this way with me for a number of years. Neither Adobe nor I could fathom why. On two occasions, they sent me a complete new set of discs, but to no avail. The solution which resolved the problem was to copy the complete CD/DVD to a named folder on one of my hard drives, and then run the install from there. Copying the disc like that also serves another purpose. If you lose the disc, you still have the necessary files to reinstall things.

In Closing

I hope that some of you will get some good ideas about storage and note keeping from this article. It's never too late to get started, even if things are in a shambles to start off. Do your housekeeping a little at a time, and you may find that being organized isn't such a big job after all.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site <http://www.brcs.org/hirsch.php>. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a loose leaf notebook for future reference. Remember, the PDF version offers full color, wherever color elements might be involved, and often images which could not be used in the newsletter. From the October 2011 issue of TUGNET, The Users Group Network, Granada Hills, CA.

Excel Tips

(Copyright © 2010 by Sharon Parq Associates, Inc. Reprinted by permission. Thousands of free Microsoft Excel tips can be found online at <http://excel.tips.net>)

Excel includes a feature that allows you to outline your data. This simply means that Excel analyzes your data and assigns different rows to different "levels." These levels can then be selectively hidden or displayed, depending on your needs. An outline is handy for getting a quick understanding of large amounts of data.

You can create an outline in several ways:

- *Insert automatic subtotals.* Select a cell in a data list, then choose Subtotals from the Data menu. (Display the Data tab of the ribbon in Excel 2007, then click on Subtotal in the Outline group.)
- *Let Excel automatically outline your data list.* Select the list that you want outlined, then choose Group and Outline from the Data menu, then Auto Outline from the resulting submenu. (If you are using Excel 2007, display the Data tab of the ribbon, click Group from the Outline group, then click Auto Outline.)

- *Manually outline your data list.* Select the data you consider to be detail information, then choose Group and Outline from the Data menu, then Group from the resulting submenu. (In Excel 2007, display the Data tab of the ribbon, click Group from the Outline group, then click Group.) Repeat the process for all other detail information in the data list.

Once your data is outlined, outline symbols appear at the left side of the worksheet. You can display different levels of data by using the mouse to click on the various symbols.

Deleting a Header

When you create a new Excel spreadsheet, it contains page headers. If you want to get rid of the page header, follow these steps:

1. Select Page Setup from the File menu. This displays the Page Setup dialog box.
2. Make sure the HeaderIFooter tab is selected. Using the Header drop-down list, select the very top predefined header. This appears as (none).
3. Click on OK to close the Page Setup dialog box.

Recognizing a Header Row When Sorting

There are two ways you can sort information in Excel: using the Sort Ascending and Sort Descending tools on the toolbar or by using the Sort dialog box. Using the toolbar tools allows you to do the sort more quickly, but Excel makes a few assumptions in the process.

First, Excel assumes that you want to sort only by the column of whatever cell you have selected. If you want to perform secondary and tertiary sorts on more than one column (or row), you need to use the Sort dialog box.

The second assumption affects exactly what Excel sorts. If you have a single cell selected, Excel extends the selection to select a range (much like pressing Ctrl+Shift+8) bounded by one or more blank columns and rows. It then examines the first row in the selected range to determine if it contains header information or not.

This is where sorting with the toolbar tools can become tricky, your header (assuming you have one) must meet some rather strict guidelines in order for Excel to recognize it as a header. For instance, if there are any blank cells in the header row, Excel may think it isn't a header. Likewise, if the header row is formatted the same as the other rows in the data range, then it may not recognize it.

Only after selecting the range and determining if there is a header row will Excel do the actual sorting. How pleased you are with the results depends on whether Excel got both the range selection and the header row determination right. For instance, if Excel doesn't think you have a header row, and you do, then your header is sorted into the body of the data; this is generally a bad thing.

To make sure that your data range is recognized correctly, use the Ctrl+Shift+8 shortcut to see what Excel selects; this is what will be sorted. If it doesn't match your expectations, then you need to either modify the character of the data in your table, or you need to sort by selecting the data range before using the Sort dialog box.

To make sure that your heading is recognized correctly, use the Ctrl+Shift+8 shortcut to select the data range, then look at the first row. If your header has blank

cells among those selected in the first row, or the first row is formatted just like the second row, or you have more than one header row selected, then Excel assumes you have no header row at all. To correct this, make changes in your header row to make sure it is recognized properly by Excel.

Comma-Delimited Differences for PC and Mac

Excel allows you to save worksheet data in a comma-delimited format, so you can use it with other programs. Comma delimited files are often referred to as CSV (comma-separated value) files, and are often used for exchanging data between programs.

When selecting how to export your data, you need to be sure that you pick the export format that is appropriate for the system on which it will be used. There are actually three CSV formats included with Excel:

- CSV (Comma delimited) (*.csv)
- CSV (Macintosh) (*.csv)
- CSV (MS-DOS) (*.csv)

You can choose any of these CSV options by using the Save As Type drop-down list at the bottom of the Save As dialog box. There are subtle differences between all three formats, but for most people, the first and third formats are essentially the same—they both work on the PC. The second format, for the Macintosh, is worth noting, however.

If your export file is destined for use on a Macintosh, you should choose the second CSV option. This option results in a CSV file where each record (each line in the file) is terminated with a carriage return, as expected by the Mac. In the PC world, lines are terminated with a carriage return/line feed combination, which can muck things up on the Macintosh.

If you are creating the CSV export file on the Mac for later use on the PC, you will want to make sure that you select a CSV format appropriate for the target system. The Mac includes CSV options for both Windows and MS-DOS systems. You should be able to choose either option and have the file work just fine.

Entering Numbers in Excel

When you enter information into a cell in your worksheet, you may wonder exactly how Excel translates what you enter. Excel first tries to convert information into numbers. Numbers are just that—any of the digits (0 through 9), optionally with special characters. The most common of these special characters are the period (taken to be a decimal point), a comma between numbers, a minus sign or plus sign, and a percent sign after the number. If you use the percent sign, Excel assumes you are entering a percentage, and thereby divides the number by 100 for internal storage.

Other special characters can be used, as well. For instance, if you preface your number with a dollar sign, Excel assumes you are entering a currency amount. You can also enter numbers surrounded by parentheses—such as (123)—which is another way of indicating a negative number. The slash character (*/*) can be used to indicate either a fraction or a date. Finally, you can use the letter E (upper- or lowercase) to indicate that you are entering a number in scientific notation. All of these different numbers and symbols are summarized in the following table:

Symbol	Meaning
-	If used before a number or after a number followed by the letter E (as in I 23E-45), it is taken as a negative sign. If entered between numbers, assumed first to be a date separator, unless the numbers are illegal for a date; in which case it is considered text. If entered after a number, then the entry is assumed to be text.
+	If used before a number or after a number followed by the letter E (as in l23E+45), it is ignored. If entered between or after numbers, it is considered text.
()	When completely surrounding a number, assumed to be a negative sign. In all other instances (except in formulas), assumed to be text.
,	When followed by at least three digits, assumed to be a hundreds separator. ,In all other instances, assumed to be text.
/	If entered between numbers, assumed first to be a date separator-provided the numbers can be translated to a valid date. In all other instances, assumed to be text.
\$	When preceding digits, assumed to indicate that the number represents currency. In all other instances, assumed to be text.
%	When following digits, assumed to indicate that the number represents a percentage. In all other instances, assumed to be text.
.	When used once within an entry, assumed to be a decimal point. In all other instances, assumed to be text.
E or e	When used once within an entry, assumed to indicate that the number is being entered in scientific notation. The value to the left of the E is normalized to between I and 10, and the value to the right is used to represent the power to which the value is raised.

Remember that when you use symbols in your numbers, they must make sense. For instance, you cannot input two decimal points or two percent signs and expect Excel to understand what you are doing. If you try entering such a nonsensical number, chances are Excel will assume you are entering text.

Setting Your Default Directory

Normally, Excel starts looking for spreadsheets in the directory in which you started the program. Typically this is your directory. If you want to change the default directory path, you can do so in the following manner:

1. Choose Options from the Tools menu. You will see the Options Dialog box.
2. Make sure the General tab is selected.
3. Change the Default File Location box to reflect the path of the directory you want to use as the default for your Excel files.
4. Click on OK.

More Free Online TV but Be Careful with This One!

by Ira Wilsker

In recent months, I have written several columns about some of the free utilities that can be used to play live TV and radio on the computer. All of the previous software products that I wrote about worked, and very few users reported any significant problems with them. One regular reader of this column has been emailing me telling me about a “fantastic” (his description) free TV utility that did not just simply offer many of the same thousands of live TV and radio stations that the others offered, but this one also offered some premium satellite and cable channels for free. We exchanged several emails as I researched the software he praised, and I started to be a little disturbed about what I found out about it. Now the author just released a new version on November 12, so I decided to try it and report back to my reader about what I found. This column is that report.

The software that this reader has been begging me to try is ChrisTV Online! Free version 5.10, available for download from online.chris-tv.com/download.html. There is also a “Premium” version that sells for \$30 that has additional features. Both versions claim “... access to more than 1800 TV channels and 600 radio stations from all over the globe (more than 100 countries).” Written in Romania by Cristian Ciplea, this software has a large following, but during the installation of the 5 MB download, I started to get suspicious about the program.

After downloading the free version of the program and agreeing to the terms of service, I was greeted by a window asking for my permission to install “Relevant Knowledge” on my computer. Cognizant that most users simply click “Agree” and move on, I decided to read the fine print before clicking on “Agree” and found that RelevantKnowledge was a program that some security websites referred to as spyware or malware, because according to one source (www.bleepingcomputer.com/uninstall/1054/RelevantKnowledge.html), “Relevant Knowledge is a MarketScore variant that monitors browsing habits and sends un-solicited advertisements. Relevant Knowledge is bundled in many free-ware utilities.” On its own website, relevantknowledge.com is self described as, “...part of an online market research community with over 2 million members worldwide.

RelevantKnowledge relies on its members to gain valuable insight into Internet trends and behavior. In exchange for participating in periodic surveys on topics of interest to the Internet community, and for having their Internet browsing and purchasing activity monitored, RelevantKnowledge sponsors select software that its members can enjoy for free.” Not wanting my surfing habits monitored, I refused to agree to have RelevantKnowledge installed on my computer, and went to the next step of the installation process. It is notable that older versions of ChrisTV Online! Free may have included several other utilities considered by others to be spyware, but besides the RelevantKnowledge mentioned above, this version 5.10 seemed to be clean of malware.

Next, I was given the option of having Chris TV install a browser toolbar on my computer, and have my default search engine changed to the one affiliated with Chris TV. I refused the toolbar and search engine, and went to the next step, which finished installing ChrisTV Online! Free. Once installed, after rejecting its toolbar, search engine, and RelevantKnowledge monitoring service, that program appeared to function as advertised. In order to receive all 1800+ TV channels, the user must have Windows Media Player, RealPlayer (or a RealPlayer alternative), Flash, and SOPfilter installed, all of which are available as free downloads linked from online.chris-tv.com/download.html.

Opening Chris TV Online!, I noticed that stations can be sorted and displayed by genre, including category (business, children's, news, etc.), station type (TV stations, radio stations webcams, video on demand), language, and alphabetically by station name. Being ethnocentric, I decided to explore the 395 U.S. based TV channels listed. The U.S. channels include network news (such as ABC news), local access channels from all over the country, home based streaming TV from several geeks and nerds, college TV stations (Brigham Young, Texas A&M, Cal Poly Pomona, George Mason, and many others), CSPAN (1, 2, and 3), CBN (Christian Broadcasting Network), city TV stations (San Diego, Rockville, Daytona Beach, Fairfax, among others), several local FOX TV and dozens of independent TV stations, shopping networks, live webcams from several cities (including Waikiki Beach), traffic cameras, religious stations, and a wide assortment of other streaming TV.

If these 395 U.S. channels are not enough, over 1400 other channels are available from around the world. While all of the channels are not streaming 24/7, making them unavailable at certain times, there is always a wide selection available. I especially like the international live web cams which show real-time scenes from around the world including traffic, street scenes, beaches, resorts, harbors, airports, government buildings, and religious sites. Religious sites streaming live include the Kotel (Wailing Wall) in Jerusalem, and the Vatican. One annoyance is that every few minutes a popup which obscures part of the screen appears and advertises the Premium edition, touting that it can also record any of the streaming media displayed; clicking on the red dot in the upper-left corner of the popup will close the popup, only to have it reappear a few minutes later.

The ChrisTV Online! Free 5.10 performed as advertised, and worked fairly well, provided the proper media software was installed. For anyone considering this product, who is also willing to put up with the irritating periodic popup advertising the Premium version, and the attempt to install questionable software on the computer, Chris TV Online! FREE would be a good choice. I emphatically recommend that users do not install RelevantKnowledge or the toolbar, without which the product works fine, except for the Premium version popup ads.

There is a companion free product, ChrisPC JTV Player, which allows the user to "Watch up to 500 Live Justin.tv channels." These justin.tv channels (now offering 2019 channels) are mostly home produced channels displaying live video games, locally produced music, webcams, barnyard scenes (really!), sky scenes, bird cages, aquariums, and other varied independent content. While the free ChrisPC JTV Player works fine,

I have one grave concern about some of the Justin.tv channels which it can display. Several of the channels appear to be illegally pirated feeds of live commercial network programming, a practice I strongly condemn. It appears that some video thieves are capturing live satellite or cable feeds, and illegally rebroadcasting them over the internet, a blatantly illegal and inappropriate action I will not condone. For this explicit reason, I cannot recommend ChrisPC JTV Player and its Justin.tv connection, and I strongly implore readers not to download this product.

While the Chris software itself seems to work fine, I do not trust any software publisher that tries to get its users to install questionable third-party software products, or enables the users to engage in potentially illegal activities, such as the viewing of pirated copyrighted video products.

This is really not so different from the illegal music, video, and software websites and services that provide pirated intellectual property, which has in some cases has resulted in civil penalties against the users. For these reasons, I suggest that users absolutely avoid the ChrisPC JTV Player, and be very suspicious about the ChrisTV Online! Free version 5.10. There are several other competitive and free legitimate products that do not pose such risks, and I suggest that users stick to those and not these Chris products. Caveat Emptor!

WEBSITES:

<http://online.chris-tv.com>

<http://online.chris-tv.com/comparison.html>

<http://www.chris-pc.com/jtv/index.html>

<http://www.relevantknowledge.com>

<http://www.justin.tv>

Free Comprehensive Security Suite from Agnitum

by Ira Wilsker

Once again, another security software vendor has released a free PC security program, joining an already crowded field of competitors, but his one is different. While most of the free security offerings are single purpose programs, such as antivirus only, anti spyware only, or firewall only, this one is one of the few that offers an integrated and somewhat complete security suite for free. While many in the U.S. may not have heard of this company, it is very popular in Europe, and has an excellent reputation in the security field. This company, the pride of St. Petersburg, Russia, is Agnitum, the publisher of Outpost Security Suite Free.

On my antiquated but still functional XP machine, which is now only used occasionally since I started using my more powerful Windows 7 machine, I had used the Outpost Firewall (free edition) from Agnitum, and was very satisfied with it. I have been following Agnitum and its security products for over 10 years, and have always found their products to be among the best. A few years ago, as I started to migrate to integrated security suites from individual security programs, I started using other products, but still held a warm spot for Agnitum, and its excellent Outpost Firewall (free) that I had used for several years without any problems. I continued to

recommend Outpost Firewall for those who needed a free firewall, and have never regretted those recommendations. Recently I read online that Agnitum had released a free version of its popular commercial (paid) security suite, Outpost Security Suite Free. While Agnitum had released earlier versions of its commercial security suite, they recently (December, 2010) released a free version with the moniker version 7.04, recognizing that there had been earlier versions of the paid product. The new version 7.04 is available in both the new free version, and the paid commercial version.

While there are very few free security suites available (I am only aware of the Outpost and Comodo free security suites), the Outpost Security Suite Free is the only one that has earned the cherished VB100 certification for efficacy at protecting from malware, something that its commercial brother has won more than ten consecutive times. An 83.2 MB download for the free 32 bit version (updates.agnitum.com/free/OutpostSecuritySuiteInstall.exe), and a 92.7 MB download for the free 64 bit version (updates.agnitum.com/free/OutpostSecuritySuiteInstall64.exe), Outpost Security Suite Free is a very comprehensive security suite. This fully functional free suite includes antivirus, firewall (one of the best in the industry), antispyware, anti spyware, proactive operating software protection, free updates, and protection from dangerous or hijacked websites. While this free version uses cloud computing for many of its protections, it is very light on system resources and does not significantly degrade computer performance. The free version, which is adequate for most users, has all of the same functionality as the paid version, except the free version lacks the separate identity theft protection feature (but identity theft protection is included in the firewall of the free version), active technical support, multiple languages, and the number of daily updates offered by the paid version. Despite lacking these “bells and whistles,” the free version is totally adequate for most users. Outpost Security Suite Free will run on 32bit and 64bit versions of Windows 7, Vista, and XP, and has low minimal hardware requirements of a 450 MHz CPU, 256 MB RAM, and 200 MB of hard drive space. With system requirements this “light,” the software will run fine on most netbook computers and other older computers.

Outpost Security Suite Free has some interesting features, a few of which are lacking in non-Agnitum expensive commercial competitors. Many of the current malware threats in circulation can penetrate the installed security software by deactivating or otherwise turning off the protection immediately prior to infecting the computer; with Outpost, that is very unlikely. According to Agnitum, “There’s no way Outpost solutions can be powered off by malicious applications. Whatever tricks these may use, Outpost preserves each and every bit of its file structure and guarantees ongoing protection.” Another very powerful feature of the Outpost Security Suite (both Free and Pro versions), which dwarfs some of its competitors is its scanning speed, where it is one of the fastest scanners available. Outpost Security Suite uses what it calls its “SmartScan technology” which it claims “...dramatically reduces scanning times by caching previous check results and handling new file modifications.” Much of the malware circulating attacks the operating system in its attempt to take over the computer; Outpost Security Suite uses a proprietary “System Guard” to protect the operating system from being taken over or otherwise compromised by malware.

Novices and expert users alike will appreciate the “cloud computing” aspects of Outpost Security Suite, especially in its ability to automatically configure itself using its cloud based ImproveNet user collaboration network. ImproveNet automatically configures the software and implements rules that control how the most popular applications access the web. While the expert user may want to customize the rules and configurations, the novice user will find that the settings automatically maintained by the ImproveNet user network will provide excellent protection without the need to set rules or other forms of control. Simply, Outpost Security Suite just works as installed, without tweaking and configuration. For those who may want to use only parts of the suite, such as the excellent and highly rated firewall, the expert user can selectively turn off the unwanted components, retaining only those desired components. While the blogs contain some posts by expert users who swear by this selective process, using only selected components along with products from other software publishers, the typical user is well served and protected by using the entire suite with its default setting, and the rules automatically implemented by the ImproveNet user collaboration service.

For those who do not have an integrated and comprehensive security suite, Outpost Security Suite Free would be an excellent choice to replace what you may already be using (or not using). If your commercial security suite is up for renewal, and you want to look at a free alternative, this would be a very good choice. If you purchase or receive a new computer for the holidays, Outpost Security Suite Free would be a wise choice. As I have said many times before in this column, there is no valid reason not to have security software, and with Outpost Security Suite Free, you can have excellent and comprehensive protection at no cost.

WEBSITES:

<http://free.agnitum.com>

<http://free.agnitum.com/why-outpost-security-free.php>

<http://free.agnitum.com/download.php>

<http://updates.agnitum.com/free/OutpostSecuritySuiteInstall.exe> - Direct Download 32 bit

<http://updates.agnitum.com/free/OutpostSecuritySuiteInstall64.exe> - Direct Download 64 bit

<http://dottech.org/freeware-reviews/18593>



Program Removal Options

Q. What's the best way to remove a program?

A. When you need to uninstall a program, the first place to look is Start > Programs > Name of Program, to determine if the program has its own uninstaller. Some do, some don't, but if it does, it's always best to use a program's integrated removal utility. If it doesn't have its own uninstaller, then go to your Control Panel and select Add/Remove programs as your next step. If you encounter a stubborn program that just won't budge, all is not lost. In that case, it's time to bring in the big guns and use a third-party uninstaller such as Revo Uninstaller (www.revouninstaller.com), which will get the job done.

Q. I'm sorry my knowledge is so limited, but I am not sure what is meant by a "program." I tried looking it up and asking some friends, but I never seem to be able to get a straightforward answer that I can understand. If anybody can help me, I know you can, Mr. M.

A. I'm feeling the pressure, so I'll do my best: A program, by definition, is a set of instructions that are grouped together to accomplish a given task or tasks. The instructions are written in code or a programming language that a computer can understand. Windows, which is your computer's operating system, is a very complex program comprised of millions of lines of code. Think of your operating system as the engine that powers your computer and provides instructions to perform various tasks, as well as interacting with software (smaller programs) that you install. A program is variously referred to as "software" or an "application," or "app," for short. Word, WordPerfect, PowerPoint, Quicken, Internet Explorer, Thunderbird and Firefox are all popular programs.

Q. I am running Windows XP. Can I create a desktop shortcut to turn my computer off? I look forward to your newsletter every Friday. It is extremely helpful and informative.

A. Thank you. Yes, the exhausting process of clicking Start > Turn Off Computer > Turn Off can be circumvented with a shortcut. To do that, right-click your Desktop and choose New > Shortcut. In the Location field type in shutdown -s. (It has to be entered exactly as it appears here, with the same spacing: shutdown space hyphen letter "s".) Click Next and either leave the existing "Shutdown" name or type a new name such as "Off" and click Finish. Any time you want to turn off your computer thereafter, double-click your new Desktop shortcut. Presto, off!

Q. I need to establish a second email address. I am concerned that I not lose my current email address, nor end up with my email in the wrong email account. Blessings and thanks.

A. I would suggest taking a look at Gmail (www.gmail.com), which is free, Web-based mail. You can create as many accounts as you wish and no matter how many Gmail accounts you create, they are all separate and distinct. Let's say you create your first Gmail account as aardvark@gmail.com, and your password is crumpet. You then decide to create a second Gmail account and you select aardvarkmania@gmail.com as your email address and use cumquat as your password. When you want to check mail for your first account, you'll log in using aardvark with the password crumpet. When you're done with that, log out and then log back in using aardvarkmania and cumquat. Periodically, I check email in all seven of my Gmail accounts, so I just log in, check, log out; log back in to another account, check, log out, log back in to the third account, etc. Each account is autonomous so no messages will be commingled with any messages in any other Gmail account.

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

Phone Scoop

With its breaking news coverage and in-depth reviews, Phone Scoop is one of the most comprehensive resources for cell phone shoppers, users, enthusiasts, and professionals, focusing on the U.S. market. The site's database includes specifications, feature lists, photos, links, and user reviews. Visitors can also choose specific phones in a variety of ways and view detailed side-by-side comparisons.

www.phonescoop.com

YouTomb

There are millions of videos on YouTube, but thousands have also been removed. If any video footage online is challenged by virtue of copyright infringement, YouTube will remove it. YouTomb is a research project conducted by students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that archives the top videos removed from YouTube so we, the people, can make our own decision whether the removal was appropriate or not. We can't do anything about it, of course, but if you would like to see what was removed from YouTube, click on over to YouTomb.

<http://youtomb.mit.edu>

For plain-English answers to your questions by email, plus great computing tips, subscribe to Mr. Modem's award-winning WEEKLY newsletter. Subscribe using Promo Code 1146 and receive a free month (four weekly issues!) with your six-month subscription. To view a sample issue or subscribe, visit www.MrModem.com.

Miscellany

<http://www.techradar.com/news/internet/25-handy-google-search-tips-and-tricks-904624?src=rss&attr=newsintern>

Thinking about a new computer?

<http://windowssecrets.com/2010/12/02/01-Your-next-PC-thinking-beyond-the-desktop/#story1>

Gizmo's freeware

The best freeware reviewed and rated
<http://www.techsupportalert.com/>

Edit PDF Files Online for Free. No Download Required

There are plenty of free programs around for reading PDF files but if you want to edit a PDF file, your choices are much more limited. At least they were until now. This web free service allows you to change the PDF text, move pages around and much more. Because PDF Escape (www.pdfescape.com) doesn't just let you edit PDF files (change the text, move pages around, etc., etc), it's totally free to use and it's an online app. Because it's an online app there's nothing to download or install. Just fire up your web browser, upload the PDF file in question, perform the required actions, then download the results. No, it's not perfect, but for simple PDF editing it is ideal and you certainly can't beat the price.

What to do

... when you see one of those "Your PC is infected!" warnings pop up on your screen. Close the dialog without clicking any of its links. Go directly to a security site that you know and trust, and run their on-demand scanner. Sites with good, free, on-demand scanners include McAfee (Security Scan Plus <http://home.mcafee.com/store/Product.aspx?productid=mss>), Trend Micro (HouseCall <http://housecall.trendmicro.com/>), Symantec (Security Scan http://security.symantec.com/sscv6/home.asp?languid=ie&venid=sym&plaid=23&pkj=MFBSKVYRM_HCGVRVRMNR), and ESET (Online Scanner <http://www.eset.com/online-scanner>).

When you want to permanently install a security tool, do so directly from the vendor's own site — not through unknown, intermediate pages or links. —Fred Langa

This is fun:

<http://storyofstuff.org/electronics/>

Society News

December 14, 2010 – Year End Meeting
Penfield Library
by Jan Rothfuss

Due to the weather, attendance was down but there were plenty of cookies. There was no Help's Half Hour. The only business discussed was a strategy for confirming/cancelling scheduled meetings due to weather. It was proposed that, when weather may be an issue on meeting nights, a decision will be made by noon on the meeting day. An announcement will be placed on the web page and an email will be sent to all on the RCSi e-mailing list.

Those present then walked through various computer-based Jeopardy games and had a great time (we didn't keep score so we all felt very smart). Arpad did a great job of entertaining us!

The Lighter Side

People who plug their computer keyboards into hi-fi systems aren't idiots. To call them that would be stereotyping.

He dropped a computer on his toes. It caused megahertz.

I got so angry when my cell phone battery died that my counselor suggested I find an outlet.