

MONITOR

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Next Meeting
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Everything You Wanted to Know About Databases

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Using Menus

by Jim Cerny
Sarasota PCUG, FL

You walk into McDonald's or Burger King and up there on their nice flat-panel displays are their menus. Their choices are limited so their menus are short. But if you go to the Ritz and ask for the wine list – wow, what a list of choices! And their choices are grouped into categories too. Each restaurant has its own menu of choices. So do computer programs.

Menus, toolbars, and ribbons are the tools we use to do what we want in a program. They provide us with specific commands (or actions) or options we can change. Whether you are playing a game, creating a document, are on the internet, or doing email, every program has options (or commands) and these options can be changed by you. Toolbars and ribbons have symbols (icons) which are intended to give you a visual clue as to what that tool or option does. If you don't want to guess, just "hover" your mouse (that is, move your mouse so the arrow is pointing to a tool symbol) and a small box will appear with the name of that tool. This is a good way to learn the tools or icons you want to use.

Menus, however, use words to tell us what the option or command is. Clicking on (use the left mouse button please) the word of a menu, such as "File," or "Edit," or "Help" will open a menu of options for you. (Ribbons are another form of a tool bar of options). Sometimes you will not see the full and complete menu right away, just wait or click on the arrow at the bottom of that short list to get the complete menu. (The shorter list that first appears shows menu commands that you have recently used.) Menus have no "X" in the upper right corner to close the menu unless the menu opens in a window. Sometimes a menu will appear because your fingers hit some wrong keys. So how do you get rid of a menu without doing anything? – Just click OFF of the menu and the menu will go away (and no option is selected). If you do want to select one of the menu options, just click on it. What happens next is either the command or option will be put into effect, or you may get another menu or window with more options. Microsoft and most other software (programs) have generally agreed on some conventions for menus. Although these may not always apply, try looking at some menus in the programs you use to see if these work:

1. If a menu has a letter underlined try holding down the "Alt" key on your keyboard and then hitting that letter. The menu should appear without you using the mouse to click on it.
2. If a menu item has three periods after it "... " it means that selecting that item will open another menu or window of options.
3. If a menu item has a keystroke code next to it, such as "Ctrl + P" or "Ctrl + C" it means that this command or option can also be made by hitting that key combination on your keyboard without having to open the menu at all. To do "Ctrl + C" for example, you hold down the control key on your keyboard and then hit the letter "c" key.
4. If a menu item has an arrow next to it pointing to the right, it will show you more options under that menu when you pause your mouse there.
5. You can use the arrow keys (up and down) to move to the menu option you want, then hit the "Enter" key to do it. If a menu item has a right-arrow, hit the right-arrow key to see that list.
6. If a menu item is in gray (i.e. not black) it means that you can not use that menu option now. For example, you cannot use the "copy" menu option until you have first highlighted or selected something to copy. So, that command will be gray in the menu until you have selected something, then it will be black and usable.
7. Some menu options will have boxes or circles for you to click on to put a dot or a

checkmark in them. Round buttons are usually called “radio” buttons because they may allow only ONE of the items on the list to be selected. Like car radios you can only push one of the buttons at a time. You can’t listen to two stations at once, can you? Boxes, however, can be checked or unchecked in any combination. After making your selections, click on “ok” or “apply” at the bottom.

The bigger and better the program the more options there are available for you. Try playing with some menus in a game program or the Paint program just for fun. What you learn will apply to many programs and you will enjoy using your computer even more. Once you master how to use menus, go to the Ritz and ask for their wine list!

From the August 2012 issue of the Sarasota PC Monitor. Courtesy of APCUG.

Millions More Free Books to Download or Read Online

by Ira Wilsker

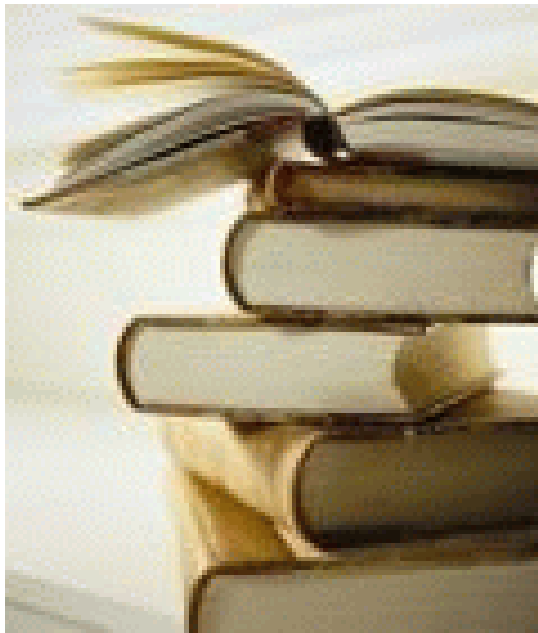
Since I was old enough to hold a book, I have been an avid reader. Our living room and all of the bedrooms in my house have at least one wall covered by a filled bookshelf. All of my children were brought up with a love of books and reading, a love that has been passed on to their children. On a regular basis I purchase books for myself and my family from the local bookstores, as well as online sources such as Amazon and Better World Books (my personal favorite). For the past few years I have been supplementing my physical book purchases with digital book purchases, purchasing titles that can be read on my computers or smartphone.

In past columns I had written about the vast libraries of free books available from Google (books.google.com), and Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org). While there is obviously some redundancy and overlap in titles between all of the resources, I have been downloading or viewing online countless free books from other resources including the Open Library, and the free libraries available from Amazon for its Kindle reader and Barnes and Noble for its Nook reader.

The Open Library (OpenLibrary.org) has an extensive library of well over a million ebooks available (precisely 1,191,271 ebooks available as I type this). Registration on the site is required for access, but registration is free and very easy; no personal information is required to register. The Open Library offers much more than just free ebooks, it also offers other interesting services to its members. Open Library has over a million titles labeled with a green, open book “Read Icon” which indicates that the titles with that icon are available to all for free. An orange lock “Daisy Icon” indicates over 250,000 modern ebooks available in the “Protected DAISY” format for the “U.S. print-disabled community.” A green book “Borrow Icon” indicates any of the 10,000 titles that indicate a book that can be borrowed by anyone from the Open Library, limited to one copy at a time, for up to two weeks. This same “Borrow Icon” also indicates books that may be available to be lent to other libraries.

The Open Library is fully searchable with a variety of available search options. I did a simple search limited to ebooks of the word “nursing” and had 1,842 hits. The default display sorts the results by relevance, but the display can also be sorted by “Most

Editions,” “First Published,” or “Most Recent”. The results were about evenly split with titles displaying the “Read Icon” indicating that the book is available to anyone to read, or a “Daisy Icon” (yellow lock) indicating that those titles are restricted to the “U.S. print-disabled community.” Being especially fond of antique books, I selected a readable version of “The Nurse.” written by Luigi Tansillo, and first published in 1800. Clicking on the title opened the menu displaying the available options for this particular book. For “The Nurse” there were several options presented. Being somewhat ethnocentric, I selected the 3rd edition published in English in 1804, rather than the 2nd edition published in Italian in 1800. I first selected the “Read Online” option, which opened a web based reader; this displayed images of each page of the book, along with simple and intuitive controls. One helpful feature was a speaker icon on the top-right corner of the display, which would read each page using a



computerized speech synthesis, much like a traditional audio book. Other options available included the ability to download the book in a wide selection of digital formats including PDF, plain text, DAISY, ePub, DjVu, MOBI, and “Send to Kindle.” With over a million other free ebook titles available in a variety of formats, there is likely to be something available for everybody.

It is hard to watch TV, read a magazine, or listen to the radio without hearing an advertisement for Amazon’s Kindle or Barnes and Noble’s Nook series of digital e-readers. While those tablet-like digital devices are enormously popular, both Amazon (tinyurl.com/9yeuuan) and Barnes and Noble (www.barnesandnoble.com/u/nook-mobile-apps

[/379003593](http://379003593)) offer a wide assortment of free apps (applications) for almost all computers and smart devices including PCs, MACs, iPhones, iPads, Android smart phones and tablets, and a variety of other devices. On my Android smartphone and all of my PCs, I have downloaded and installed (free) both the Amazon Kindle and Barnes and Noble Nook apps. While I can purchase millions of titles with either the Kindle or Nook apps, it is worthwhile to know that both Amazon and Barnes and Noble offer a large library of free books and other publications for download! As I type this, I currently have about 100 free books already downloaded to my smartphone, an available personable library to keep me occupied and entertained for many hours.

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Websites:

<http://openlibrary.org> (Free registration required)

<http://www.freestufftimes.com/99-free-kindle-ebook-downloads>

<http://tinyurl.com/9yeuuan> (Complete list of FREE Kindle reader apps from Amazon)

<http://tinyurl.com/FreeKindleBooks101912> (Free ebooks from Amazon)

<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/u/Free-eBooks/379003078/>

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<http://www.gutenberg.org> (40,000 free ebooks)

<http://books.google.com> (Millions of free books)

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FreeEbooks11-FreeBarnesNobleEbooks-MilitaryHistory.jpg



The System Tray Icons

by Jim Cerny
Sarasota PCUG, FL

On all editions of Windows, if you look at the lower right corner of your desktop computer screen -- next to the clock with the time -- you will see some small icons. Have you ever wondered what those icons are and why they are there? Well, this area of the Desktop is called the “System Tray” (or “systray”) and, basically, this area on your taskbar is showing what programs are started when your computer is turned on. Here is a sample shot of my Systray:

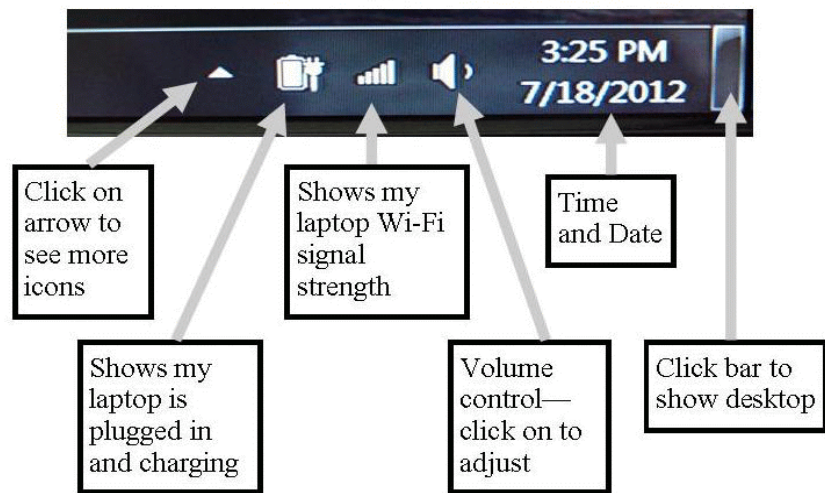
Normally you would not change the icons in this area by deleting them or adding new ones. New icons are added here auto-matically when you install programs on your computer that are intended to be running “in the background” all the time. But there are a few basic things about these little icons that are very helpful to know.

The Clock – The time and date for your computer should be correct, if not you can change the time and date by left-clicking your mouse on the current time and this will open small window in which you can set

your clock and date. Normally you will only have to do this once because it will automatically adjust for daylight savings time. Even when your computer is unplugged, turned off, or if your laptop has no battery power left, the clock is probably still running with its own tiny power supply. The clock is essential to all computer functions because everything you do is recorded with the date and time. If you save a new file, for example, the date and time is recorded with the file.

The Volume Control– This little icon looks like a side view of a speaker. If you “hover” your mouse on that icon it will show you the percent volume level. Click on the icon to open the slide volume control. If you have a desktop computer then you probably also have a set of two external speakers (plugged into a wall outlet) that have their own “on/off” switch and their own volume control. But your external speakers can only project the volume given to them from your computer. So, if you have external speakers, adjust the volume control on your computer to maximum and then use the controls on the external speakers. If you have a laptop (and do not have external speakers connected to it) then you click on this icon to change the volume. Many laptops have a small wheel or buttons on the keyboard to also control the volume.

The SYSTRAY at the Right End of My Taskbar (Windows 7)



Check your laptop's manual. If you do have a laptop and want to enjoy beautiful sound for music or movies, a set of external speakers is a great idea.

Your Virus Protection – You should have an active virus protection program running on your computer. If you do you will see an icon in this area which represents this program. Naturally your virus protection program should always be running whenever you start your computer. Click on its icon here to open a window to work with your anti-virus program.

The Laptop Icons – The systray also shows icons about your laptop's power supply. For example, if my laptop is connected to a wall outlet, I see an icon with a plug symbol. If my laptop is running on battery, I see a battery symbol with a percentage of battery power level remaining. *Wireless Signal Strength Level* – Since your laptop connects without wires to the internet in your home (or at McDonald's or other places) you should have a "bar indicator" icon here that shows the strength of the wireless (Wi-Fi) signal. The more bars the stronger the signal. "Hovering" the mouse on this icon will show you the name of the network you are using. Click on it to see a list of all connections available from which you can select. Naturally you would want to use the connection with the strongest signal, but remember that many wireless networks are secured and require a password to use.

Perhaps there are more icons in this area than can fit into this part of the Taskbar – if so there will be a small triangle "arrowhead" for you to click on to see all the icons. Just hover your mouse over an icon to see a small text box description. If you don't know what an icon is for, jot down the description and enter that text into Google and find out. You can also Google "systray icons" and get more information.

Remember that the icons you see in your systray will probably be different from the icons that others have on their computers. Perhaps you will not need to know all of them, but if you are a bit curious like me, it could be fun to find out. Just "hover" your mouse on whatever it is and a small label should appear with a short name or description. Then use Google to satisfy your itchy curiosity!

From the September 2012 issue of the Sarasota PC Monitor. Courtesy of APCUG.

Using Virtual Operating Systems

by Bob Elgines

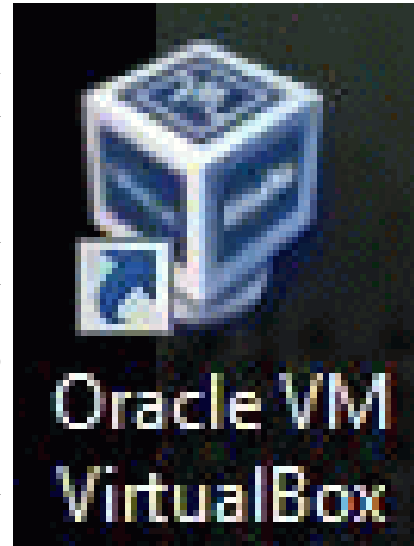
Colorado River Computer Club (CRCC)

If you have Windows 7 Pro or better you can use Microsoft's free Virtual Program and a free Windows XP copy. If not, or you wish to add more than one Virtual Disk Drive, then use the free Oracle Virtual Program. Of course you will need the OS (Operating System) disk you wish to load, such as Win XP, Lynx, etc.

After installing the Oracle program double click on it and the Oracle VM (Virtual Manager) welcome window comes up.

1. Click on NEW (located in the upper left), then NEXT
2. Put in a Name of the OS, such as LYNX, then NEXT
3. Select memory size needed for your Virtual Drive, such as 512MB for Lynx or Win XP, and 1000 MB for Vista. Click NEXT
4. Select "Create New Hard Disk," then NEXT

5. Select “VDI,” then NEXT
 6. Select “Dynamically allocated,” then NEXT
 7. Set 8 to 20 GB for hard drive space depending on OS. Example 10 for Lynx and XP, 20 for Vista, then NEXT
 8. SUMMARY is listed, if good, then click on CREATE
 9. The “Oracle Virtual Manager” window comes up. You are almost ready for installing your OS, double click on the listing of OS you just created (upper left).
 10. Your Host drive is now shown (usually Drive D:). Install your OS installation disk (CD or DVD), an “Auto play” window comes up, X it out, then click on NEXT
 11. Another Summary, click on START, your OS starts to install. Follow instructions on the screen.
- After installation of the OS you may want to install your own Antivirus program if you are going to use it on the web.



If the Internet does not work you may have to change the settings on the VM windows under Internet. Most common setting are: attached to: NAT; and Adapter Type: Intel Pro /1000 MT (Desktop). Try different Adapter types first. These worked fine for XP and Lynx.

To setup the USB for reading thumb drives, etc. First plug in a Thumb Drive. Second bring up Oracle VM and on the lower right double click on USB. The USB screen comes up, then click on “Add Empty Filter”, symbol located on the right, next click on the “+” symbol, if your thumb drive is listed, then select it. Now click on the “+” again and select your mouse (using a USB Mouse) on the list, then take the check mark off. In the picture is “Store & Go” for Thumb Drive and “Logitech” for Mouse.

Courtesy of APCUG.

Keep Your Friends

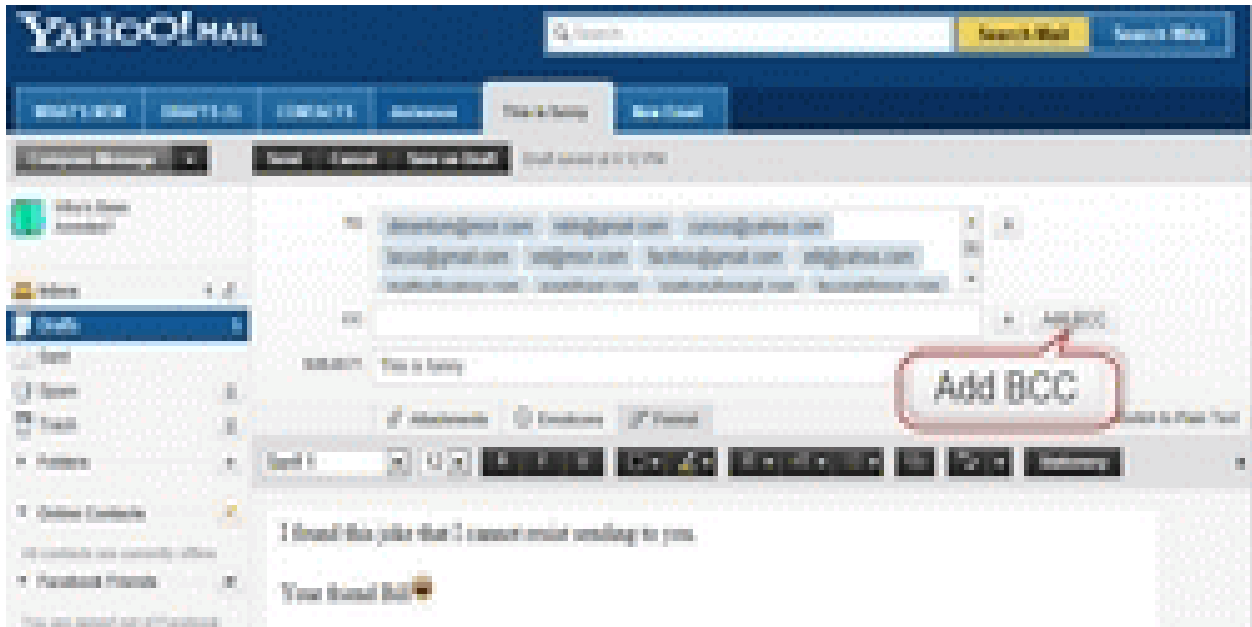
by Hewie Poplock

Central Florida Computer Society, FL

When you pass on a funny joke or some information to several of your friends, I want you to do so without jeopardizing their privacy or upsetting them. I like a good joke. What I do not like is my email address exposed along with 20 or 30 of your friends’ addresses as well.

Every time I try to explain this to a friend who sends me an email as shown below, I seem to lose a friend. Maybe it is my approach, but they get mad at me for saying something about it. I hope that you and I can simply point them to this article, and maybe they will learn the correct netiquette for sending emails to a group.

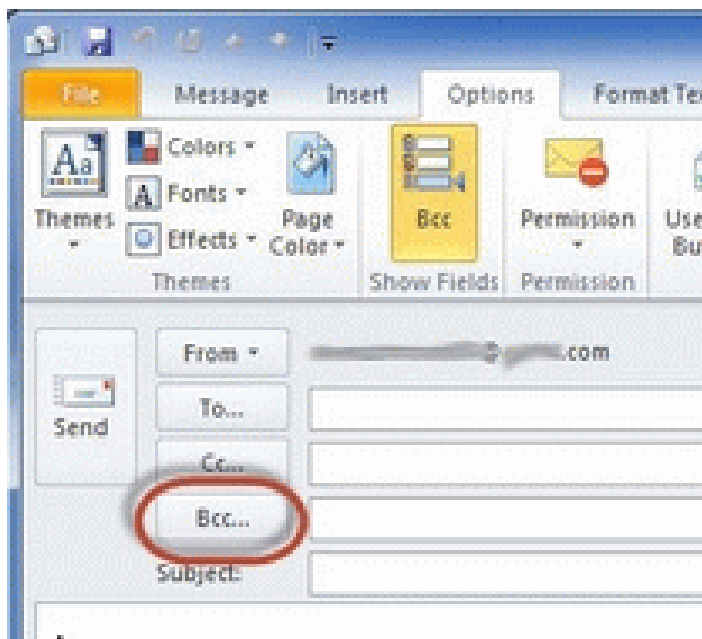
This friend sent an email to 37 friends, including me. He placed their names in the “To:” portion of Yahoo Mail. That makes sense. However, in doing so he shared with all 37, his list of friends and their email addresses. He also included the original sender’s address. If any of the 37 people decide to forward the message again, it will include all of his friends’ email addresses as well as the original sender’s. If one of their



friends decides to do the same, all of their friends will be included. At that point someone can have quite a list of addresses to do with whatever they wish.

This is what concerns me. I am sure that you have received a lot of these forwarded messages. Anyone can take all of those addresses and could harvest all of them for some later use, perhaps an ad campaign, or some other message. It has happen to me. I started to get ads from someone on a friend's email list.

Now here's a suggestion on how to remedy that problem. Note the line below the "To" line is "CC" which goes back to the typewriter days and stands for "Carbon Copy." Any addresses placed on that line will also be visible to everyone. So that does not help. However, there is a third choice which is "BCC" from that same typewriter period, which means "Blind Carbon Copy." Anyone listed in the "Bcc" line will not see any of those addresses at all, not even their own.



When sending Yahoo Mail, that line is not visible by default, but can be easily added.

When you click on the "Add BCC" button, it will add a third line to address portion for that blind copy. Then add all of your friends' addresses who you want to send the message to, in the "BCC" line. When they receive the message, they will only see your address and perhaps their own.

There are several approaches to what you put in the "To" line. I always just put in my email address, thus sending it to me to verify that it

was sent and each recipient sees my address.

The approach is similar in other email programs. I will show you a few of them. If you use another program to read and send email, look for the “BCC” location. If you do not see it, check the “Help” area for that program and search on “BCC.”

Gmail is almost the same as Yahoo! Mail. The “Add Bcc” link is below the “To” line. Even the “Cc” is not available until you click it.

Once you add the line, it will be similar to the other. Place all of the addresses in the “Bcc” line and use your address in the “To” line.

Again, AOL is almost identical. They place the buttons to add the “Bcc” and “Cc” just above the “To” line.

Follow the same instructions as above with your AOL mail. Microsoft Outlook is a bit more difficult to locate and add the “Bcc” to your message. The default may have omitted that important part of the message.

To the right if the “File” tab is the tab “Options.” Click that. You will click the choice for “Bcc.”

When you click that choice the “Bcc” line will be available in the message.

At that point, you are ready to add your addresses, and following my advice above, complete and send your message.

In most of the programs, once you add the “Bcc” to a message, it will be added to the defaults and should show up from then on. My only other suggestion is to clean up the heading from the forwarded portion and delete the header containing your sender’s address. I usually look through the forwarded portion and remove any ads that may have been included or attached when it was sent to me. Get rid of the junk.

I hope that this helps and will keep your friends happy and safe, as well as keeping your friends. Just refer them to this article. Note: the addresses in my graphics are made up and not real. Do not try to harvest them.

Courtesy of APCUG.

Wi-Fi On The Road

by Hewie Poplock

Central Florida Computer Society

In the past, finding free Wi-Fi away from home was difficult, if not impossible. However, most of the fast food restaurants and many other locations now make Wi-Fi available. If that is true, and it is, that should be the end of my article.

However, in a recent column by a local newspaper, there is a growing issue of quality of that Wi-Fi. I have found McDonalds’ connections consistently good. It has the AT&T name and their hotspots seem to be maintained.

I recently stopped at a Burger King, which had a sign advertising Free Wi-Fi. After I ordered my food and sat down, I could not find their hotspot. When I approached the employees, including the shift manager, my response was, “Oh, it doesn’t always work.” I guess this was one of those times.

While I was there, I noticed a man who was bringing in his laptop and a printer to use the Wi-Fi to send a report to his boss. He set up on the floor as there was not a table near the electrical outlet.

Once he was set up, he also approached the employees about getting on line, without

any more help than I had received. I told him where the nearest McDonalds' was located.

That brings me to my point. While many of these restaurants have Wi-Fi, the quality or the consistency of it working is not always reliable. To compound that, one of my friends pointed out that he recently stopped at a McDonalds, only to discover that his laptop battery was dead, and that particular location had no electrical outlets. The manager stated that they may be doing a remodel of the location and hopefully they will add some outlets.

Our computer user group has some meetings at a couple of local Denny's Restaurants, which also advertise inside and out that they have free Wi-Fi. One of our special interest groups meets at one Denny's every month and has been doing so for several years. For several months we could no longer use their Wi-Fi, if were available at all. The manager kept telling us that a third party took care of it and she reported it. A district manager from the franchise happened to be in the building the same night as one of our meetings. He promised it would get fixed. A few months later, when it was not, we contacted him again. He actually fired the 3rd party and hired someone else. We now have WiFi and he has happy customers, who were about to go elsewhere.

Merely offering free Wi-Fi to customers is not enough. Having it work consistently gets you repeat and happy customers. At a minimum, every shift manager should know how to reset a router, if they receive complaints. Certainly they should show the customer a concern and see that it get repaired by doing a follow up. It's called training.

I also carry an extension cord and strip in my car, in case there is but one outlet and it needs to be shared, or it is not near an open table.

Document Your Life with Photo-Graphic Memory

by Phil Sorrentino

Sarasota PCUG, FL

A photographic memory is probably something we all would like. And, just think, you can have at least the effect of a photographic memory just by using your camera and your computer to document your activities à your life.

It is amazing how much paper we collect along the way. Most of it goes neatly into file folders and then those folders go neatly into multi-draw filing cases or boxes. Before you know it you have multiple multi-draw filing cases in the den, the home office and/or the bedroom closet. Have you ever looked at the pile of paper you have collected over these many years? It's not a pretty picture. Now there are some things that we just have to hang on to, like licenses, automobile registrations, titles of any sort, and certain special papers that might have an emotional or historical attachment. But the rest of the pile might be eliminated or at least pared down. (And how about old tax forms? How many years do you have to keep the paper? Or is an electronic copy good enough for taxes paid 10 years ago?)

What I'm suggesting is that with your computer, and a scanner and a camera, you can probably cut the paper you need to save down to a very manageable size, and even eliminate some of those storage cases. The scanner is really the key here. The camera

is for unusually large items, or those things that just can't be copied on a flat-bed scanner. Consider this, review the contents of some of those folders and if you need to know that something occurred, and is relevant, like an award you were given from your last employment. If you have not looked at it since you received it, then you can probably scan it in and throw away the original. I know how difficult this will be for some people, but after a little practice it will get a lot easier.

A very important thing here is that you have adequate backup to guarantee that you will never lose the scanned in files. If you don't have adequate backup, which means multiple copies of the data files of the scanned objects, than this is not going to be a good idea. So before you commit to this, make sure you have a good backup plan in place. Make sure that you can guarantee at least two if not three copies of the scanned in files. The first two copies could be two external or portable disk drives and the third might be on DVD or a flash memory device. Once the backup plan is in place and you are really using it, the fun begins. Gather your papers, separate the ones that you have to keep and make a pile of those that can be shredded after they are scanned. Do you really need those greeting cards you received 15 years ago?

In order to make sure that you can retrieve any of these documents, it is good to establish a naming convention before you start to scan the paper documents; after all, it is no use to have all the data if you can't access it quickly. As you collect your scanned documents, you will be creating a database. Two popular ways of organizing your database are 1- by date, and 2- by event. If every file that you want to keep has a name starting with yyyy-mm-dd and is followed by a descriptive name, then when the digital files are put in a digital folder, they will organize in a chronological fashion. yyyy represents the year, like 2011, mm represents the numerical value of the month like 04 for April, and dd represents the day of the month like 01 for April 1. (For some databases only the year and month may be adequate.) Now, when you go looking for a document, all you have to know is the date associated with the item, and you can just look in the chronological order to find it. Let's say that if you scanned in an award that you received in June 1976, then you would look in the area of 1976-06, to find that document. Windows Explorer makes it easy to find scanned documents because it shows a thumbnail photo of the file, while you are searching for the file. This is especially helpful because a scanned file is usually saved as a .jpg file, a picture file.

If you do use this naming convention, then you can organize your folders to represent either years (or groups of years), or events. If you choose to be completely chronological, then the folders will be named 1970, 1971, 1972, – you get the idea. Then you could put the 1970s folders into a folder named 1970s, and you could do the same with all other decades. If you choose to organize around events, then the folders might have names like awards, house info, car info, career, really, any collection of events or things that makes sense to you and any others who will use the database.

Besides your scanned in documents, you can include photos from your digital camera. If you use the same naming convention with your photos, then you can mix them in with the documents and they all will organize in chronological order. Sometimes that makes a lot of sense when you have both pictures and documents that are part of the same event. This combination sometimes helps tell the complete story

of the activities of the specific event.

Another way to organize your database is to organize your folders around event; then you might name your folders birthdays, anniversaries, parties, weddings, you get this idea too. So these would represent those types of events throughout the years. The fact that the files are chronologically named means they would organize chronologically inside the folders, making it easy to find a specific event within an event folder. And you can mix the two types of database folders. You could have your basic folders chronologically named, but inside a year you might have a series of events like a vacation trip to the Grand Canyon where the pictures from the trip would show what you saw and the documents you collected like maps and brochures from the particular destinations. As long as each file is chronologically named, the files will organize in a way that will make it easy for you to find a specific document, or group of pictures.

Not only do you save storage space, but once your pictures and documents are in your database, they are immediately available because they are literally at your finger tips (if your fingers are on the keyboard). I bet you'll be able to impress your friends how fast you can find those awards you received from your first employer. Of course there are always a few items that just can't be committed to electronic files and there are always a few pictures of the grandchildren that just must be made into an 8 by 10 for the wall. But, just think, with a lot of those paper documents shredded, and all of your photos committed to digital files, you won't need all of that paper and picture storage. It will probably free up some valuable storage space and maybe you can even make a few bucks by selling those filing cabinets.

From the September 2012 issue of PC Monitor, newsletter of the Sarasota PCUG, FL. Courtesy APCUG.

What You Can Do If Your Mobile Phone Gets Wet

by Tom Allen

Mountain Computer User Group, GA

Many of you get your mobile phone wet by one way or another. You worry as you mistakenly drop your mobile phone in water. It can also get wet if you are out in a heavy rain. However, there is no need to panic. It is possible to save your wet mobile phone by quickly repairing it. In order to save your mobile phone from water damage, you can consider doing this:

The most important thing you have to do is to act rapidly. Quickly remove all the detachable parts as well as covers possible such as the back cover, battery, the SIM card, memory card etc.

Next, take a piece of cloth or a tissue paper to wipe the excess water you are able to notice within the mobile phone. Make sure that you dry it completely. If you don't do this, the water inside the mobile phone will begin to evaporate and gather in places which will be difficult to reach.

Take a hairdryer and begin drying the mobile phone while giving more consideration to the place where the battery is located. The battery housing usually consists of tiny holes to let in air (so giving more space for water) inside the mobile

phone. It will take several minutes. You may also set your oven to 180 degrees and let it preheat (if you are brave!). Turn it off, open the door and set the phone in it for about half an hour. I have done this but watched it very carefully and the phone survived.

From the May 2012 issue of Mountain Bits & Bites, newsletter of the Mountain Computer User Group, GA. Courtesy APCUG.

Free Utilities to Remove Difficult Malware

by Ira Wilsker

I recently received a call from a regular reader of this column about a problem he was having with a pernicious piece of malware on his computer, one of the newer iterations of the infamous “FBI Ransomware” malware. In the past he had successfully utilized two of the most widely used free anti-malware utilities to clean infected computers, but now he had a really difficult to remove type of malware that had hijacked his computer. Appropriately, and based on his prior satisfactory disinfection experiences, he first used the free portable version of SuperAntiSpyware (superantispyware.com) and the free version of MalwareBytes (malwarebytes.org) to scan the computer booted in safe mode with networking (F8). Both of these products have an excellent reputation of detecting and removing malware. As he had done previously while cleaning compromised computers, he booted the computer in safe mode with networking, inserted the USB flash drive, and performed a full scan first with an updated version of MalwareBytes, followed by a full scan with the updated portable version of SuperAntiSpyware. The MalwareBytes scan detected and neutralized several trojans and other forms of malware, while the follow-up scan with SuperAntiSpyware indicated a clean computer.

Upon rebooting the computer fully into Windows, the ransomware was still in control of his computer. While unusual, it is not unknown that some malware can survive detection and removal with properly updated versions of some of the most popular and widely used anti-malware utilities. In the continuous cat-and-mouse game between cyber crooks and security software companies it is inevitable that the bad guy will frequently create new malware that will temporarily penetrate the existing security software on a computer, and evade detection by excellent quality software explicitly designed to detect and remove malware. In this particular case a build of the endemic FBI Ransomware penetrated the existing defenses on his computer, a major name brand security product, and hijacked his computer, holding it for ransom. A



EMSIKSOFT EMERGENCY KIT 3.0 NEW!

[Software collection] Version 3.0.0.1 - 10/22/2012

- Your emergency kit for infected PCs!
- Detects and removes Malware
- >10 million known dangers
- World class dual-scan-engine
- 100% portable - perfect for USB sticks
- HiJackFree and BlitzBlank included

[Download!](#)
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HOW IT WORKS:

The Emsisoft Emergency Kit contains a collection of programs that can be used without a software installation to scan and clean infected computers for malware.

reasonable first response is to run one or more of the well respected and updated malware detection and removal utilities, and eradicate the problem; in this case, that contemporary build of FBI Ransomware was able to survive the assault by two of the most reliable anti-malware utilities.

While MalwareBytes and SuperAntiSpyware are both outstandingly fine products with an excellent reputation at detecting and removing malware (my personal first choices), no product is 100% effective at preventing or removing malware. While the build of malware on this particular computer was not detected or removed by the cleaning utilities, it is inevitable that a near update of these utilities will be capable of detecting and removing this specific digital threat. As unlikely as it is that these fine utilities when properly installed and updated will be unable to clean an infected computer, sometimes it is necessary to call out the “big guns” and attack the malware with some other weapons.

When simpler methods fail to detect and remove all of the malware from a badly infected computer, my first “come to guy” is the recently upgraded freeware edition of “Emsisoft Emergency Kit 3.0” (emsisoft.com/en/software/eek). This Emergency Kit 3.0 is a large 225mb download that is intended to be run from a USB flash drive. The file is downloaded in ZIP (compressed) format, and then “unzipped” (uncompressed) to a flash drive. A zip file can be uncompressed with the Windows Explorer (file manager) incorporated in all versions of Windows since XP, or any one of the many third party file compression utilities can perform this simple function. Once uncompressed on the flash drive, the protocol is to first boot the computer into “Safe Mode with Networking” by turning on the computer (cold boot) and immediately tapping the F8 key every few seconds until the safe mode menu screen appears; highlight the selection “Safe Mode with Networking,” hit enter, and the computer will boot into safe mode, only loading the minimal necessary drivers and programs. Do not be shocked if the screen looks unusual with very large icons, as the default screen is at low resolution. If you are offered a choice to restore the computer to an earlier time, do not do it! Also if a window opens offering a help menu, simply exit that screen; all you want is a basic desktop screen. Insert the flash drive (it may take a few moments for the computer to recognize it), and open your file manager by clicking on the computer icon or the Windows Explorer (file manager) icon. Select the flash drive letter which will open the flash drive. There may be a “Start” item displayed, which may be used to open the Emsisoft menu, or click on the RUN file folder on the flash drive, and then open “a2emergencykit.exe.”

The Emergency Kit program will load offering the user a few choices; if given the opportunity to check for updates, and there is a good internet connection, then update the data files. Emsisoft releases several large signature files every day, and updating the files will make it more likely that the Emergency Kit will be able to satisfactorily resolve the malware infestation. The Emsisoft malware library contains over 10 million malware digital signatures, with maybe thousands of new signatures added every few hours of every day. This Emergency Kit utilizes a dual scan technology, basically using two different scan engines to detect and remove malware. If malware is found my personal recommendation is to quarantine what is found, which will render the

malware inert without actually deleting it. My rationale for quarantine rather than delete is that the Emergency Kit is so powerful and comprehensive that in my experience it has detected a few false positives which, if deleted, could adversely impact the performance and function of some of the software on the computer. If I suspect that any file detected as malware is a false positive, I upload the questionable file to VirusTotal (virustotal.com). VirusTotal scans the questioned file with dozens of different scan engines, and displays the detailed results of the multiple scans; if most of the scan engines report that the file is clean, it likely is clean and safe, and may be restored from quarantine; if most indicate that it is malware, then the file is likely safe to delete. In my experience with Emsisoft Emergency Kit, I have found it extremely competent and thorough at detecting malware of all types; the downside of this kit is that since the malware database is so large, and since it is using a dual scan technology, it is among the slowest of scanners. The slow scan speed, as well as its sensitivity (both a positive and negative feature) and occasional reporting of false positives, is why I choose to use the more traditional malware scanners as my primary choices; but if they fail, then this Emsisoft Emergency Kit becomes my first choice malware detector and killer.

Sometimes malware files are so seriously embedded in a system that the traditional Windows based utilities cannot detect and remove them. Some of the most ruthless forms of malware hide in almost inaccessible places on a hard drive, or in protected files that are a part of the Windows operating system. Since these files are loaded when Windows boots, they are somewhat “locked” or otherwise protected by the operating system when loaded, which also protects their malware content. Another form of malware hides in the deepest spots in the hard drive, not typically accessible when Windows is loaded; when any of these scenarios occur, it may be necessary to scan the computer without Windows being loaded at all. For this purpose, many of the leading security software publishers offer a large downloadable file that can be properly burned to a CD or DVD disc, making it bootable from the disc which contains its own operating system, rather than loading Windows from the hard drive.

TrendMicro offers its “Trend Micro Rescue Disk” for download from trendsecure.com/Info/Rescue_Disk/html/download.html. Once down-loaded, by following the on screen instructions, this file can create a bootable CD, DVD, or bootable flash drive with its own operating system as well as an updated version of the TrendMicro scan engine. My recommendation is to create a bootable CD or DVD disk, rather than a bootable USB flash drive as virtually all contemporary Windows computers can easily boot from a CD or DVD, but many cannot easily boot from a USB flash drive. To make almost any Windows computer bootable from a CD or DVD (this applies to any bootable CD or DVD, not just this TrendMicro disc) TrendMicro gives these instructions:“

1. Insert the disc or USB drive into the computer.
2. Restart the computer.
3. When the computer powers up again, look for a BIOS setup message, which often looks like Press [KEY] to run Setup where [KEY] might be Delete, ESC, or one of the F1–F12 keys.>
4. Once the BIOS Setup Utility has opened, look for a tab labeled Boot, Boot Order, or

Boot Options.”

Set the CD or DVD drive (or bootable USB flash drive, if listed) as the first boot device. Once completed, save and exit; the computer will now boot from the disc or flash drive. Without a disc in the drive, the computer will boot normally from its hard drive. Once the computer is booted with the Rescue Disk, follow the onscreen prompts and menu to scan the computer from malware. Since the hard drive is not used to boot the infected computer, and a compatible operating system other than the built in Windows is loaded, any hidden malware or compromised system files now become accessible to the malware scanner.

In addition to the TrendMicro Rescue Disk, several other excellent security software publishers offer a similar bootable disc that will load its own operating system and scan for malware. These publishers include BitDefender, Kaspersky, and AVG. All of them offer a free downloadable file, that is reasonably up to date when downloaded, and may also offer the opportunity for a “soft” update when loaded, and internet access is available. These rescue disks are downloaded in ISO format which requires a third party utility to properly burn them to a disc; simply burning these ISO files to a disc like any other files will simply not work as a bootable disc. I recommend the free ImgBurn software (imgburn.com/index.php?act=download) for creating a bootable disc from an ISO file.

The Kaspersky Rescue Disk 10 is available for download (free) as a 264mb ISO file from support.kaspersky.com/viruses/rescuedisk. Click on the “Product Info” tab for direct download, and “Knowledge Base” for additional information and assistance. According to Kaspersky, “Kaspersky Rescue Disk 10 is designed to scan and disinfect x86 and x64-compatible computers that have been infected. The application should be used when the infection is at such level that it is impossible to disinfect the computer using anti-virus applications or malware removal utilities running under the operating system. In this case, disinfection is more efficient because malware programs do not gain control when the operating system is being loaded.”

AVG offers its AVG Rescue CD, which it calls, “... a comprehensive toolkit that will repair system crashes and return systems to a state where they can operate at full capacity, thanks to deep-rooted infections having been removed and file systems repaired.” The AVG Rescue software is available for free as an ISO file to create a bootable CD, or in ZIP compression format to create a bootable USB flash drive. The ISO file requires the use of an ISO burning program such as the ImgBurn mentioned above. AVG Rescue CD is available for download from avg.com/us-en/avg-rescue-cd. The ISO file is an 84mb download, and the USB version is a 95mb zip file.

BitDefender offers an ISO file, the latest build of its free rescue CD, as a direct 360mb download from download.bitdefender.com/rescue_cd/v2/bitdefender-rescue-cd.iso. This ISO file is fully up to date when downloaded, and requires a utility such as ImgBurn to create the bootable CD from the ISO file. Instructions on how to create the bootable CD are available from bitdefender.com/support/How-to-create-a-Bitdefender-Rescue-CD-627.html. Also at this same location are detailed instructions on how to use the ISO file to create a bootable USB flash drive.

With a comprehensive selection of anti-malware detection and removal utilities

such as those listed above, any PC user should be able to clean the most heavily malware infested computer. While it may take some time and effort to download and install the utilities, and to possibly burn a CD or make a bootable USB flash drive, the results will be well worth the effort.

Websites:

<https://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/eeek>

<https://www.virustotal.com>

http://www.trendsecure.com/Info/Rescue_Disk/html/download.html

<http://free.antivirus.com/us/rescue-disk/index.html> (**INSTRUCTIONS for Rescue Disk**)

<http://www.imgburn.com> (free ISO file burner)

<http://www.imgburn.com/index.php?act=download>

<http://support.kaspersky.com/viruses/rescuedisk>

<http://www.avg.com/us-en/avg-rescue-cd>

<http://www.bitdefender.com/support/How-to-create-a-Bitdefender-Rescue-CD-627.html>

http://download.bitdefender.com/rescue_cd/v2/bitdefender-rescue-cd.iso (**Direct download of latest build**)

Society News

Help's Half Hour Notes

Led by a team of members

November 13, 2012

St. John's Meadows

Q: Everyone welcomed Arpad. He continued with some Black Friday predictions.

A: Arpad predicted that Black Friday will push smart 3-D TVs. They allow access to movies and Skype. Some include Android so you can download lots of things. A 42" tv will be around \$500. LG makes a kit with 3-D LED \$799 - \$1200 for kit.

Laptops will start at \$149 - \$199. Contracts for 2 years might allow \$99.

Windows 8 will be on sale for \$50 at Best Buy/Staples.

If you are buying a tablet, watch the OS (processor).

Cameras with 10x telephoto zoom will be at \$149. Digital SLRs will be on sale including a lens. Most sales will be on out-going models. 16 gb memory cards - \$10. USB flash drives 16g for \$15. Class 4, 6, 10 with 10 fastest.

GPS are staying about the same – they are as low as they will go. \$70 - \$150.

Tablets will be on sale. Watch RAM memory. Low end models will be offered. Nexus 7 will be around \$199 – 1 g RAM.

Phone upgrades? You can usually get last year's smart phone if you renew with a 2 year contract.

The Lighter Side

Friend: "You know that anti-virus program you installed on my computer for me? It keeps popping up some sort of message about a trojan or something while I'm surfing on the internet. It doesn't seem to be doing anything about it because I keep getting the message, so I uninstalled the anti-virus program. And now I don't get that message any more."

Customer: "So, is there a spray I can buy for my computer?"

Tech Support: "Er, I beg your pardon?"

Customer: "You know, a spray -- one that I can spray the inside of my computer with."

Tech Support: "What sort of spray are we talking about here?"

(I thought perhaps he had seen someone use a can of compressed air to clean out a machine and mistook it for some sort of spray.)

Customer: "Well, I was hoping that there would be a spray that would kill all the viruses."

Tech Support: "Aaaah...ummm...you mean like a bug spray? For computer viruses?"

Customer: "Yes! Would that help?"

Tech Support: "I'm really very sorry, but nobody makes anything like that. Computer viruses are just a name we give to malicious software. We use the word 'virus' because it explains how the software behaves."

Customer: "So...no spray then."

Tech Support: "No."

Customer: "I am having some problems with my email account."

Tech Support: "Who is your Internet provider?"

Customer: "I am not really sure but I think it's 'You've Got Mail'."