

MONITOR

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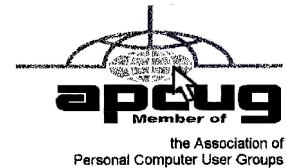
Next Meeting
Tuesday, November 12

Cyber Crimes

Sergeant Chris Harrington of the Monroe Co. Sheriff's Dept.

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Free and Deeply Discounted Software at SharewareOnSale.com

by Ira Wilsker

For several years, one of the best sources of objective software reviews, evaluations, and tips has been on dotTech.org. Under the active leadership of the well respected “Ashraf,” dotTech.org has developed an impeccable reputation for honesty when evaluating software and related computer components. For many PC users, Ashraf has become the resident guru on software, and loyally and faithfully follow his evaluations and recommendations. On an unaffiliated software giveaway website, GiveawayofTheDay.com (GOTD), best known for its free daily giveaway of one legally licensed commercial software product, Ashraf’s comments and review of the day’s single software offering are strongly

considered by many of the GOTD users before deciding whether or not to download and install the day's offering. Ashraf's opinion appears to influence the daily volume of downloads.

DotTech.org has now been online for five years (October, 2008), and is viewed on a daily basis by thousands of visitors. Ashraf has expanded the online services that he offers with the creation of his Azadi Network, which he describes as, "...a web-based company that provides solutions for the digital age." Azadi is an Urdu word which means "freedom," a concept that Ashraf apparently encourages on his websites. Recently (August, 2013), Ashraf expanded his Azadi Network to include a second website, SharewareOnSale.com. Again, according to Ashraf, "Shareware OnSale connects software developers with users, offering daily software deals of free and heavily discounted programs. Although it is a relatively new service, SharewareOnSale has already garnered much attention around the world."

I first found out about SharewareOnSale.com while researching a particular software product on dotTech, and noticed a banner promoting SharewareOnSale. Now, Shareware OnSale is one of the first websites that I visit every day. In order to be better informed about new bargains offered on the site, I chose to sign up for the once daily email that lists that day's offerings; it is important to check the website frequently as the offerings are very dynamic, and frequently changing. Product offerings that may appear on the site early in the day may possibly "expire" before the end of the day as a limited time offer may expire, or a finite quantity of available product may be



downloaded, completing the offering prior to a stated expiration of the offer. On two excellent recent offers, both now expired, the offers quickly became unavailable prior to their stated expiration. One was a free, one-year "extended trial" of a newly released and updated, fully functional, comprehensive security suite, AVG Internet Security 2014. On SharewareOnSale.com it was a legitimate free download, rather than paying the \$55 charged on the AVG website for the same product. I registered on the SharewareOnSale website (one time, simple and free), put the program in my shopping cart, and checked-out with a zero balance due, with no credit card or PayPal necessary to pay for the free item. On the following screen were download links for both the 32 and 64-bit versions, which were pre-registered and fully activated when installed. Even though the AVG Internet Suite 2014 was labeled as a fully functional, not crippled in any way, trial version, the expiration date of the trial was a full year in the future. All services and updates would be available for a year, no different than any other program with an annual license. When I downloaded the AVG Internet Security 2014, SharewareOnSale said that the offer was still good for five more days, but just two days later this particular offer was listed as "expired" (sharewareonsale.com/s/free-avg-internet-security-2014-54-99-value).

Another offer that I was fortunate enough to take prompt advantage of, prior to its quick expiration, was a free download of the \$40 Wondershare Video Converter Pro ([sharewareonsale.com/s/free-wonder share-video-converter-pro-39-95-value](http://sharewareonsale.com/s/free-wonder-share-video-converter-pro-39-95-value)), and excellent program for converting videos in almost any video format to almost any other video format, including dozens of formats for PC, Mac, online, YouTube, and individual smart devices. I told one of my neighbors about it the day that I downloaded and installed Wondershare Video Converter Pro, but by the next day, when he went to download it, the offer had already

expired. The important object lesson here is to frequently check the SharewareOnSale.com website, and download (or purchase) any desired item right away, as tomorrow may be too late.

On the positive side, as mentioned above, is that the content on the site is very dynamic, as new software items are very frequently added, and other offers expire. As I type this, there are several interesting deals posted, which may likely expire before readers of this column have a chance to get them, but new offers will inevitably replace the expired ones after this column is published. Some of the items currently available (which will likely expire soon and be replaced with new offers) are:

- < SoftOrbits Sketch Drawer Pro, a \$79.95 value, available free for a very limited time; this product can, “turn your digital photos into works of art! SoftOrbits Sketch Drawer Pro converts photos/images to sketches in just a few clicks.”
- < SoftOrbits Photo Digital Suite Personal on sale for \$4.99 (\$349.95 value if each component purchased individually, or \$99.95 if purchased together as a suite). According to the posting, “SoftOrbits Digital Photo Suite Personal is a software pack of 10 software titles: Batch Picture Resizer, Photo Stamp Remover, Batch Picture Protector, Html Web Gallery Creator, Red Eye Removal, Private Photo Album, Flash Drive Recovery, SoftOrbits Photo Retoucher, SoftSkin Photo Makeup, and Sketch Drawer.”
- < GiliSoft #1 Video Tools on sale for \$4.99 (\$380 value). “GiliSoft #1 Video Tools is a 7 + 2 software bundle of nine different programs: seven programs by GiliSoft (Video Converter, Screen Recorder, Video Editor, Slideshow Movie Creator, Movie DVD to Video, Movie DVD Backup, Movie DVD Creator) and two bonus gifts by EaseUS (Data Recovery Wizard and Partition Master Pro).”
- < Tenorshare Data Recovery WinPE on sale for \$2.99 (\$39.95 value). One of my personal favorites for recovering deleted or damaged files, “Tenorshare Data Recovery WinPE lets you recover lost, damaged, formatted or deleted data from a bootable/recovery CD/DVD/USB without booting into Windows.”
- < Free BlazeVideo SmartShow (\$49.95 value). “BlazeVideo SmartShow offers you the easiest way to create a unique movie with your favorite pictures, video clips, music and voice-over.”

While it is somewhat inevitable that many, if not all of these offers will expire prior to publication, Ashraf has been very good at keeping SharewareOnSale.com well stocked with an assortment of free and deeply discounted software products. Examples of some of the other now expired offerings include Wondershare PDF Converter, a \$60 utility given away for free, that can convert PDF files in a large variety of other editable formats including Word; RoboForm Everywhere, a very popular \$20 password manager, that was also available for free for a limited time; Process Lasso Pro, an excellent \$15 system and memory manager, that was available for free; Paragon Partition Manager 12, a very popular \$40 hard drive partition manager, that was available for \$2.99; Ashampoo Burning Studio 2013, a comprehensive \$40 CD and DVD burning utility, that was given away for free; and dozens of other utilities that either given away for free or sold for very nominal prices. As each of these offers expired, they were replaced by newer offers, a cycle that has been repeating since the inception and availability of the service.

It is somewhat amazing that Ashraf has been able to compile and make available several dozen decent utilities of various types, during the two months that ShareOnSale.com has been in existence. For those who may like notice of the free or bargain software available, I recommend signing up for the free, once daily email announcing the offerings, using the form on the top right of each SharewareonSale.com web page. Just like our local weather, if you do not see anything that you like, just come back in a few minutes or tomorrow, and the offerings will likely be different.

Websites:

<http://sharewareonsale.com>

<http://dottech.org>

<http://azadinetnetwork.com>

<http://giveawayoftheday.com>

<http://sharewareonsale.com/s/free-softorbits-sketch-drawer-pro-79-95-value>

<http://sharewareonsale.com/s/free-avg-internet-security-2014-54-99-value>

GOOGLE'S FUTURISTIC GLASSES MOVE CLOSER TO REALITY

San Francisco (AP) — Google helped create a world brimming with digital distractions for people spending more of their lives tethered to the Internet. It's a phenomenon that seems unlikely to change so Google is working on a way to search for information, read text messages, watch online video and post photos on social networks without having to fumble around with a hand-held device.

The breakthrough is a wearable computer — a pair of Internet-connected glasses that Google Inc. began secretly building more than two years ago. The technology progressed far enough for Google to announce “Project Glass” in April. Now the futuristic experiment is moving closer to becoming a mass-market product.

Google announced that it's selling a prototype of the glasses to U.S. computer programmers attending a recent three-day conference. Developers willing to pay \$1,500 for a pair of the glasses will receive them early next year. The company is counting on the programmers to suggest improvements and build applications that will make them even more useful.

“This is new technology and we really want you to shape it,” Google co-founder Sergey Brin told about 6,000 attendees. “We want to get it out into the hands of passionate people as soon as possible.” If all goes well, a less expensive version of the glasses is expected to go on sale for consumers in early 2014. Without estimating a price for the consumer version, Brin made it clear the glasses will cost more than smartphones. “We do view this as a premium sort of thing,” Brin said during a question-and-answer session with reporters.

Brin acknowledged Google still needs to fix a variety of bugs in the glasses and figure out how to make the battery last longer so people can wear them all day. Those challenges didn't deter Brin from providing conference attendees Wednesday with a tantalizing peek at how the glasses might change the way people interact with technology.

Google hired skydivers to jump out of a blimp hovering 7,000 feet above downtown San Francisco. They wore the Internet-connected glasses, which are equipped with a camera, to show how the product could unleash entirely new ways for people to share their most thrilling — or boring — moments. As the skydivers parachuted onto the roof of the building where the conference was held, the crowd inside was able to watch the descent through the skydivers' eyes as it happened. “I think we are definitely pushing the limits,” Brin told reporters after the demonstration. “That is our job: to push the edges of technology into the future.”

The glasses have become the focal point of Brin's work since he stepped away from Google's day-to-day operations early last year to join the engineers working on ambitious projects that might once have seemed like the stuff of science fiction. Besides the Internet-connected glass, the so-called Google X lab has also developed a fleet of driverless cars that cruise roads. The engineers there also dream of building elevators that could transport people into space.



While wearing Google's glasses, directions to a destination or a text message from a friend can appear literally before your eyes. You can converse with friends in a video chat, take a photo without taking out a camera or phone or even buy a few things online as you walk around.

The glasses will likely be seen by many critics as the latest innovation that shortens attention spans and makes it more difficult for people to fully appreciate what's happening around them.

But Brin and the other engineers are hoping the glasses will make it easier for people to strike the proper balance between the virtual and physical worlds. If they realize their goal, it will seem odd in three or four years for people to be looking up and down on their phones when they could have all the digital tools they need in a pair of glasses.

Isabelle Olsson, one of the engineers working on the project, said the glasses are meant to interact with people's senses, without blocking them. The display on the glasses' computer appears as a small rectangle on a rim above the right eye.

During a short test of the prototype glasses, a reporter for The Associated Press was able to watch a video of exploding fireworks on the tiny display screen while remaining engaged with the people around him.

The glasses should appeal to runners, bicyclists and other athletes who want to take pictures of activities as they happen. Photos and video can be programmed to be taken at automatic intervals during any activity. Brin said he became excited about the project when he tossed his son in the air and a picture taken by the glasses captured the joyful moment, just the way he saw it. "That was amazing," Brin said. "There was no way I could have that memory without this device."

Source: http://news.sympatico.ca/business/googles_futuristic_glasses_move_closer_to_reality/890555f6

From the August 2012 issue of Nybbles & Bytes, a publication of the Northeastern Ohio PC Club.

Google Offers Free QuickOffice App With 10GB Storage

by Ira Wilsker

It should not be a surprise to anyone that the use of smart devices, including tablets and smart phones, is now beginning to eclipse the use of more traditional laptop and notebook computers, and making inroads on desktop computer use. While many of the traditional battles for desktop software and hardware are starting to ebb, the battle for smart devices is flaring, resulting in the rapid development and availability of significant and powerful new applications (apps). Originally in the realm of full featured desktop and laptop computers, the major software powerhouses are now battling for market share in the increasing crowded field of comprehensive office suites for smart devices.

In the desktop and laptop battlefield, Microsoft's ubiquitous Office, in its many iterations, has become the predominant Office suite, followed by excellent commercial and free competitors including Google Docs, Corel's WordPerfect suite (X6), LibreOffice, OpenOffice, Kingsoft Office, and others. With well over a billion smart devices flooding the world market, and more being sold every day at a much higher rate than more traditional computers, it was only inevitable that the battle for acceptance would turn to the smart device market, with most of these software publishers already releasing, or preparing to release, apps for the smart device market.

When I first obtained an Android device, I downloaded the free version app of Kingsoft

Office so I could access and edit most of my Microsoft Office Documents. While adequate, it was not as useful or as powerful as the Microsoft Office that I use as my primary Office suite at home and at work. One of my daughters has a Windows phone, which she expressly purchased to better enable her to work with Microsoft Office documents while away from work or home. Recently, Microsoft offered a series of apps in Windows (phone and tablets), iOS (Apple iPhone and iPad versions), and Android formats to enable users to access its cloud based Office 365 services, with much of the same usability as users are already familiar with on their desktop and laptop computers. While it is obvious that Microsoft aims at acquiring office market share in the smart device market place, substantial competition is appearing from another powerhouse; Google has made its QuickOffice product available as a free app for iOS and Android devices.

Google has quietly developed a large and loyal following of its free Google Docs service (docs.google.com), where registered (free) Google account holders can “Create, share, and collaborate on the web with documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and more.” On numerous occasions, I have uploaded many of my Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, and PowerPoint presentations to my Google Drive (cloud based storage) both for redundant backup purposes, and the ability to access, view and edit them as desired using any computer and browser with internet access. Since Google Docs allows secure online collaboration, I have worked on several group projects that required multiple users to have access to specific documents; we all could access the selected files stored on Google Drive, which could then be opened and edited by the authorized members of the group using Google Docs.

With Microsoft heavily promoting its mobile apps for Office 365, Google could not concede Office market share to Microsoft, especially since Google’s Android operating system is by far the predominant smart device operating system, with over 75% of the market (compared to only a tiny minority of Windows Mobile users). Prior to September 19, 2013, Google sold QuickOffice for \$14.99 for phone versions (iPhone and Android phones), and \$19.99 for the Android and iPad tablet versions, but as of September 19, QuickOffice is free to all, as long as they have a free Google account. With free versions (apps) that can run on almost any modern Android or iOS (Apple) smart device, Google obviously has the marketing capabilities to become the primary purveyor of smart device Office products, much to the chagrin of Microsoft. With its flagship mobile Office 365 product facing stiff competition from Google’s

QuickOffice, I sincerely doubt that Microsoft will roll over, but instead become an even more intense competitor.

Those who may not be familiar with Google’s QuickOffice (or Google Docs) may wonder about what it is; according to a recent post on a Google blog by Alan Warren, head of engineering for Google Drive, “We’re making Quickoffice available for free to everyone: students, businesses, nonprofits, governments, consumers and anyone with a Google



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What we do

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\$149⁹⁹



Desktops starting at

Rochester Computer Society
Members receive **10% off**
(must have membership card to redeem)

www.podcomputers.com



Account. Simply sign in with your Google Account to start editing Microsoft Office Excel, Word and PowerPoint files on your iPhone, iPad, Android phone or tablet.”

I downloaded the Android version of QuickOffice to my Samsung smart phone, a 17mb download, which will run on Android powered tablets and phones with Android version 2.2 or later. Despite the small virtual keyboard on my phone, I was able to create new documents in Word and Excel format, and save them to my existing Google Drive account. I then opened an existing PowerPoint file that was on my Google Drive, and edited it, saving it back to my Google Drive. The main issue that I had using my small Android phone was the limited view due to the small screen on my phone, and encountered some slight difficulty selecting text and images for editing, primarily because of my large fingertips. I was able to open and view stored PDF files without problems, other than the obvious size limitation imposed by the limitations of my small phone screen. As a quick test, I attached a Word file, newly created on my phone with QuickOffice, and attached it to an email addressed to myself, which I opened on my desktop Windows 7-64 computer. The attached QuickOffice Word file opened flawlessly in my desktop Microsoft Word 2010, with all formatting, fonts, and small graphics precisely as I created them on my phone. I did the same with both Excel and PowerPoint on my phone, and subject to the limitations of my phone’s small screen size, the spreadsheet and PowerPoint emailed from the phone to my PC all opened and displayed perfectly, without any other issues or problems. Obviously on an Android or iPad tablet, with its much larger screen and easier to manipulate keyboard and desktop, it would be much easier to create or edit Office compatible documents than it is on a much smaller phone factor.

I looked at QuickOffice on an iPhone and iPad, and found it similar to the display on comparable Android devices. QuickOffice for Apple devices, both iPad and iPhone, is a large 59.8mb download. As I found on Android devices, the display and functionality on an iPad was about the same as it was on an Android tablet, considering the design differences between the Apple and Android products.

Since anyone can register for a free Google account, including a minimum of 10GB of free cloud storage on Google Drive, and then download the appropriate free QuickOffice app for Android or iOS, anyone with a compatible smart device can now read, create, and edit Microsoft office files, saving them to Google Drive, or emailing them as desired. Once on Google Drive, files can be securely accessed via any internet connected device, including PCs, Macs, and other web enabled devices. For those desktop and laptop users who may not have Microsoft Office installed, and who may desire a free competitor to Microsoft Office, my personal choice (free) is LibreOffice (libreoffice.org), which will run on any desktop operating system (including Windows, Mac, Linux, and others), and can open, read, and write virtually any office format in the world, including all of the Microsoft Office formats.

While QuickOffice worked satisfactorily on any Android or iOS device that I tried it on, the usability of QuickOffice is greatly improved on the larger screens of a tablet, but is somewhat hindered on the smaller screen of a smart phone.

Websites:

<http://googleenterprise.blogspot.com/2013/09/freeing-quickoffice-for-everyone.html>

<http://www.google.com/drive/apps.html#quickoffice>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/quickoffice/id578386521?mt=8>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.quickoffice.android&hl=en>

<https://office.microsoft.com/en-us/>

<https://office.microsoft.com/en-us/mobile/#a>

<http://docs.google.com>

<http://www.libreoffice.org>



Transmit Super-Large Files

Q. I have approximately 100 pictures from a recent vacation that I'd like to send to others. Any suggestions for a program I should use for this?

A. "Sending" photos to me means transmitting them, in which case it would be via email. One word of caution, if I may: Unless you know your intended recipients VERY well, that's a lot of photos to inflict upon anybody. In photographic circles, 100 vacation photos equal 400 non-vacation photos to anybody who did not accompany you on the trip. It's been my experience that the level of viewer interest is in inverse proportion to the number of photos being shared. Caution is advised.

The best thing to do is to compress (ZIP) those 100 photo files into one humongous file, then use a service such as TransferBigFiles.com or MailBigFile.com. Using either service, you can upload your gonzo file to a secure area. The site will then provide a link to your designated recipients that they can click to download your file, thus circumventing any ISP-based file-size restrictions. Both sites offer free and paid services, so be sure to read about each one on their respective sites.

To compress (ZIP) all your photo files into one huge file, click to select (highlight) all the files you want to ZIP. Right-click the highlighted files and select Send To > Compressed (zipped) Folder. A .ZIP file containing all your photo files will be created. It is this ZIP file you will send. Your recipients will simply need to right-click, select Extract and select a location for the files on their computer.

If, however, by "send" you mean you would like to share your vacation photos in an online album that your invitees can then peruse until their respective heads explode, any of the popular online album-hosting sites such as Snapfish.com, Shutterfly.com or Flickr.com – and there are countless others – will serve that purpose quite nicely.

Q. I always use the BCC field when sending mail to multiple recipients. When I later want to review the folks to whom I sent an email, my Outlook 2007 Sent Items folder only shows me as the To: recipient, but not the people I sent BCCs to. Is there some way to check BCCs after sending?

A. Double-click to display the message full size in the Sent Items folder in Outlook 2007 and you will see the BCC recipients in the header of each message.

Q. Why is it that sometimes I need to type www when going to a Web site and for others I have to type http, without the www?

A. In a 'Net shell, a Web site name is converted (using a DNS or Domain Name System server) from alpha to numeric format. In other words, the word(s) you type as the address of a Web site are translated into a series of numbers called an IP (Internet Protocol) address. This address tells your browser where on the Internet the Web site can be found. (It's a bit more technical than that, but that's close enough without lapsing into insufferable geekspeak.)

Some Web site DNS records are configured to allow you to type just the SiteName.com part of it, while others are configured in such a way that it requires the www (for World Wide Web)

prefix.

Q. I know there is a great deal of medical information available on the Web, but do you know if there is anything online that can test for color blindness? Thanks, Mr. M.

A. Before sharing information of this type, I would be remiss if I didn't recommend seeking appropriate medical evaluation and consultation for definitive answers to health-related questions. I am not a doctor, nor do I portray one on television, though I did play one on radio back in the '70s -- well, until an unfortunate Cease and Desist Order was issued.

With that caveat, there is a color blindness test located at the appropriately named colorvisiontesting.com Web site. The default font on this Web site is refreshingly large and easy to read.

Q. Why, when I try to type "char map" (for Character Map) in Start > Run, do I get a message saying that Windows cannot find it? How can I get to the Character Map?

A. Typing "char map" is close, but no cigar. There should not be a space in the command line entry, so type "charmap," not "char map," without the quotes. You can also get to it (depending on the version of Windows) by clicking Start > Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Character Map.

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

The Dorcus Collection

A collection of men's fashion photography from the '50s, '60s, and polyestered '70s. Caution: Some of the language on this site is a bit on the coarse side so sensitive readers, or those subject to chafing, should proceed at their own peril.

<http://bit.ly/TIy0t>

Skillshare

An unusual site that helps visitors connect with educators in order to learn whatever skill they are interested in learning. There may be a fee associated with some classes, so be sure to review the Frequently Asked Questions in the Help area. Better safe than hysterical.

www.skillshare.com

Song Facts

Song meanings and music trivia, including highest album and chart position achieved. The trivia is quite interesting and links are provided to view a song's lyrics, purchase the song, or obtain the sheet music.

www.songfacts.com

For more information about Mr. Modem's award-winning, weekly computer-help newsletter featuring personal answers to your questions by email, visit www.MrModem.com

Teckspert Talk

by Melanie Birnbom

Century Village Computer Club Pembroke Pines, FL

How a Computer Virus Spreads and What You Can Do to Prevent It

I recently ran across an article with a link to an excellent infographic on how computer viruses get spread across the internet or networks and end up infecting your computer. It also has suggestions for what you can do to prevent it.

I suggest you ignore that the infographic was created by Norton 360 Online, because the information is too good to ignore in spite of its creation by a commercial antivirus company.

It divides the information up between seven different ways that you can unwittingly

unleash a virus onto your computer.

Each of the seven ways has two columns one for how the virus is acquired and one for how it could be prevented.

Check out the infographic for yourself, and make sure you're doing all you can to stay virus free.

<http://www.norton360online.com/how-computer-viruses-spread.html>

How to Cancel Your Online Accounts

by Rick Broida

Have you ever tried to cancel, say, your Pandora account? Then you know what a hassle it can be. First you have to find the cancellation page, which isn't exactly easy, then fill out an email form.

This is standard practice with a lot of Web services, which work hard to get you signed up and are understandably reluctant to see you go. Though some make it easier than others to cancel an account, it can definitely be a time-consuming process.

JustDelete.me provides links to the cancellation pages for hundreds of services, from Adobe to Zoho. And it color-codes each listing so you know at a glance whether it's easy, medium, hard, or even impossible to cancel.

All you do is click the name of any service you want to leave; that'll immediately take you to the corresponding cancellation page. Before you do so, however, you may want to click Show Info, which provides a brief overview of the requirements and/or policy for that service.

The info for Pandora (rating: hard), for example, reads as follows:

You have to email support from the email associated with your account. If you do not have access to that, you need to provide the email address, birth year, and zip code on the account.

JustDelete.me is handy not only for canceling accounts you already have, but also for investigating services before you sign up for them. A Pinterest account, for example, can be deactivated, but your profile and pins live on indefinitely. Who knew?

Now you do.

Rick Broida writes about business and consumer technology for PCWorld.

Internet Alerts Can Keep You Informed

Sandy Berger

CompuKISS.com

How would you like to know every time your name is mentioned on the Web? Or when there is a breakthrough on a disease that you are following? Or when your favorite actor is starting in a new movie? This is all possible with automated Internet alerts. Read this to see how it works.

Internet alerts are available by many different Internet services. The Weather channel at www.weather.com has free alerts that will give you daily weather alerts as well as alerts for allergens like pollen and also alerts for severe weather. Other alerts will keep you informed of the weather on school days and give warnings for snow and rain.

You can apply several customization options such as the time of the alert and the severity that triggers the alert.

You can get alerts sent by e-mail and/or text to a cell phone.

Many news stations also have alerts regarding news, sports, and weather. One of my local North Carolina stations, WRAL (www.wral.com) even has an app that uses GPS to alert you to severe weather no matter where you travel as long as you have your cell phone turned on.

While most other alerts are free, WRAL charges \$8 a year for their GPS-based alerts. Check your local news stations for news alerts.

The granddaddy of all alerts, Google Alerts, is a very useful one that you should be aware of. This is one of Google's powerful tools that is completely free. You can use Google Alerts to keep track of anything on the Web. Just surf over to <http://www.google.com/alerts> and enter a search query. Then choose your options. You can control how often you get alerts (as it happens, once a day, or once a week), the type of Web coverage that triggers an alert (news, blogs, video, discussions, books, or all of these), and you can also choose only the best results or all results. Enter your e-mail address and your alerts will start. You can change or remove an alert at any time. Once you start using Google Alerts, you will be surprised at the results.

Most people start with creating an alert with their own name. My 'Sandy Berger' alert tells me when any news article or blog mentions my name. Of course, it also gives me results for the other Sandy Berger. You know – that guy from the Clinton administration who stuffed documents from the National Archives into his pants. Unless you have a very unusual name, you can expect to get news of others with the same name. That's not all bad. In fact, it can be very interesting.

The Google Alerts can be wonderful if you are following the news about a certain item. For instance, they are wonderful if you are interested in following a certain disease, medical condition or treatment. You can use Google Alerts to follow any current event or any specific public figure, actor, or personality.

If you are a transplant and want to follow the news from your old hometown, this is a perfect way to do it. Just enter the name of your old city and state in the search terms. If you want to be more specific, you can just enter the zip code. This will give you results directly from your old neighborhood.

When you set up a Google Alert, you may want to limit the results to just the best results and once a day. If you let Google give you all the results as they happen, I can assure you that you will be inundated with email.

You are sure to find many different ways to use Google Alerts. In fact, it is good to play with the Alerts a little to get to just what you want. Like any Google search, you can enter as many search terms as you like to narrow the results. You can put names in quotes to get exact matches.

Be creative with your alerts. You can have Google search for coupons for your favorite restaurant. You can use it to follow a company whose stock you may be interested in purchasing. You can use it to follow an item that you want to purchase.

Quiz

by Bert Price

A. Multiple Choice (more than one choice may apply):

1. DIALOG BOX is:
 - a) an on-screen message
 - b) text messages
 - c) communication with the Provider
 - d) none of the above.
2. DISK DRIVE :
 - a) no longer used with Windows 7
 - b) software used to read CD's
 - c) hardware device that reads information on a disk
 - d) the main component of the computer.
3. FIBRE OPTICS:
 - a) Has numerous advantages over wire cables

- b) transmits data in the form of laser light over bundles of glass fiber
 - c) eye glasses made of strong woven fibers
 - d) none of the above
4. MAINFRAME:
- a) the metal box containing the pc
 - b) a large powerful computer
 - c) the main computer used by the teacher in the classroom
 - d) all of the above.
5. USER INTERFACE:
- a) the way in which a user enters commands in a given program
 - b) many users prefer a command line interface
 - c) there are three main types of interface
 - d) all of the above

B. True or False:

1. Application Software is a computer program that performs a specific task, such as word processing.
2. An INTERFACE allows you to choose commands and other options by selecting from WINDOWS, ICONS, and MENUS on the screen is known as GUI {goo-ee}.
3. The Operating System is loaded into the hard drive.
4. The smallest unit of an image is called a PIXEL.
5. The quality of the print on a page is primarily determined by the ink in the printer.
6. SMTP is an abbreviation for SIMPLE MAIL TRANSFER PROTOCOL.
7. The term justify refers to text margins.
8. If you use a good surge protector, you can be 100% sure that your pc is protected.
9. The system unit circuit board that contains the microprocessor, memory, and other chips is the HARD DRIVE
10. In LANDSCAPE, the paper is turned vertically.

C. Matching - Match column A with column B

- | A | B |
|-----------|------------------------|
| 1. LAN | a. input/output system |
| 2. CPU | b. Network |
| 3. MEMORY | c. Storage |
| 4. BIOS | d. Microprocessor |
| 5. CACHE | e. RAM |

How to Find People and Businesses Online

by Bob Rankin
askbobrankin.com

A reader asks: "I'm trying to find some friends from high school, but so far all my searches have come up empty. Can you suggest any clever (and free) ways to find a person's address, phone number or other contact information online? I've seen paid people search tools, but I'm not sure they are legit."

The Internet is all about connections. After all, it consists entirely of connections between computers. But what's important about these connections is not the computers, but the people and businesses behind them. Interestingly, "How to



find people online” is one of the most frequently Googled questions. Finding businesses online is not far behind. Whether you’re looking for an old friend, a classmate, long-lost relative, or a business contact, the “people finders” below will help you find them, if there’s a trace of them that can be found online.

To start, I recommend that you just Google someone’s name, and you will probably get more hits than you care to explore. Uncommon names are probably easier, because there will be less clutter in the results. But if your target is famous or unique in some way, you may need a bit of luck to find the right “John Doe” in the top 10 search results. Add to your search any keywords associated with your subject, such as their city, employer or school name, to increase your odds of striking the right person in this lifetime.

Online white pages directories can be helpful at finding people. My current favorite is 411.com because it has a clean interface, and doesn’t try to trick you into paying for contact info like some similar online white pages directories. 411 will tell you the person’s address, phone number, approximate age and associated persons, all for free. If you know only the person’s phone number or street address, plug it into Google, or do a reverse lookup at 411.com.

The person you seek may very well be on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or some other social networking site. These sites let you search for people in general ways, such as name and current city/state. If your friend has a common name and you don’t know where he or she is, that may produce too many results.

Other free people search tools you can try are local newspaper websites, and information aggregators like Pipl. Pipl is designed to retrieve information from what’s known as the “deep web,” inside personal profiles, directories, publications, public records and other databases where most general-purpose search engines don’t look. It then works to cluster the results that pertain to a single person and present them to the searcher.

Argali White and Yellow is a free software download (Windows only) that searches multiple online phone directories (AnyWho, Google, InfoSpace, Switchboard, and others) and presents the combined results in a clean ad-free format. It also does reverse lookups for phone numbers and addresses. The Home version is free, but only permits 10 searches a month. Argali Pro costs \$30 and does not limit your queries.

What About Email Searches?

Another common question is how to find a person’s email address. It’s difficult to do an email lookup, because even if you know the person’s name, address and telephone number, an online email directory would be a source for spammers to harvest. Your best bet is to look for them on Facebook or LinkedIn, and see if you can make contact that way. And of course, you could contact them by letter or phone, and ask!

More People Search Tools

High school and college friends can often be located with Classmates.com or Reunion.com. These are legitimate and useful sites, but both have been known to use spammy techniques to advertise their services. Have you ever gotten a spam email with a subject like “A friend has searched for you, click here to connect”? Clicking the link sends you to the site, where you are prompted to enter your name and age, and then a search is initiated. The results will often list various people who purportedly have searched on your name. The catch is that you have to join the site as a member to get information on your schoolmates.

Be wary also of sites that spam you with not-so-subtle messages like “One of your friends has a crush on you!” or “Five people in your neighborhood are looking for you!?” These sites are gimmicky or fraudulent, as is the case with any business that advertises via unsolicited emails. Some sites will ask you to enter your mobile phone number, then send you all kinds of advertising, and you end up paying for text messaging spam that can be hard to stop. If you

don't want to lay out cash, try searching in Facebook first to find schoolmates, or find your school's website and get in touch with the alumni association.

If you're looking for information on a relative, or you're interested in genealogy, see Family Search or Ancestry.com. You can also check the Social Security Administration Death Index to search for information on deceased persons. (It will ask for your name and email address to access the records. You can enter real or fake info there to get past that roadblock.) I've also found that online obituaries, typically printed in local newspaper websites, can reveal information about people, their location, and their relatives.

If you know where a person lives, the local government offices may have a searchable online database with information about property ownership, mortgages, liens, judgements, foreclosures, matrimonial records, trade licenses and other public records. A Google search for the county clerk's website will usually point you in the right direction. And just to cover all the bases, I'll mention that most U.S. states have searchable sex offender databases online.

Finding Company and Business Info

To find a business online is usually much easier than finding a person. After all, businesses want to be found by potential customers. So most businesses list themselves in search engines and specialized industry directories. Simply Googling a company name usually does the trick. If it's something boringly generic like "Bob Smith LLC," you may have to add a city and state. But usually, you can find a business online without paying for the information.

If you want more details on a business, there are online tools that will provide public information such as the company's address, phone/fax numbers, the names of the principals, a description of their business, and competing companies in that industry. See my article on Finding Company Background Information to learn about several of these tools. Other sources of business information are the online business registration databases of State Secretaries, or any of several online Yellow Pages directories.

Paid People Search Tools

If none of those tools mentioned so far turn up the person you're looking for, then a commercial people search tool may prove useful. Paid people finders can locate people who leave few traces online. They can also reveal facts such as the person's age, unlisted numbers, property ownership, bankruptcies, previous addresses, and even criminal records. Sites such as Intelius and PeopleFinders.com collect personal data on millions of citizens from public records and other sources, then charge for access to the data. The good news is that if they cannot locate the person you seek then you owe nothing.

The bad news is that the information in paid people finders may be uselessly out of date. For example, a "relative" of a friend of mine identified by PeopleFinders is a woman he divorced in 1993, and the latest address provided is equally outdated. Some people finders want you to give up your own personal data before they will give you anyone else's. That quid pro quo is up to you, but think about who might be looking for you and whether you want to be found by them.

Read more: http://askbobrankin.com/free_people_search_tools.html#ixzz2eRFMAcsB

Essential Addons for Windows

by Bob Rankin
askbobrankin.com

Microsoft Windows gets the job done when it comes to providing all of the essential elements of an operating system. It manages memory, stores and organizes your files,

makes it easy to launch programs, and connects you to the Internet. But there are a bunch of free addons that I consider essential for users who want to do more than play Solitaire. Here's my list...

Free Addons and Utilities for Windows

If you're like me, every time you get a new computer, or you re-install Windows from scratch, the work of adding your favorite extras begins all over again. Some are just for fun, some I consider essential productivity aids, and some are must-have security tools. Here are the software tools that I make sure are available on every Windows computer I manage, and some that I recommend for specific types of users.

Security: If you run Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7, there is no anti-virus protection included. Some PC vendors will install a trial version of the Norton or McAfee Internet security suites, but those expire after a few months, and you're left with outdated or non-existent protection. Fortunately, there are plenty of free internet security software tools you can download.

Windows 8 finally closed the security gap, by including Windows Defender anti-virus software in the package. This is a renamed version of Microsoft Security Essentials, a freebie that Microsoft also makes available for earlier versions of Windows.

MalwareBytes Anti-Malware is a supplementary tool that I recommend for ALL versions of Windows. Use it occasionally to scan for malware that may have snuck past your first line of defense.

Office Tools: In the distant past, Microsoft gave away a product called Microsoft Works, which was a pared-down version of their popular Office suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint). It worked, but wasn't always compatible with Office, and lacked some important features. Wordpad is newer, but similarly crippled. More recently, they've included a trial version of Office on new Windows computers. It had an expiration date, after which you had to pay to unlock the program. They also have experimented with ad-supported versions of Office that don't expire, but instead show ads on the side of the screen. And currently, they're pushing everyone to use Office, a cloud-based version of Office for which you must pay a monthly fee.

But there's no need to put up with crippled software, expiration dates, or monthly "software rental" fees. See Alternatives to Microsoft Office for some low-cost and even totally free office software that does everything you want, and is file-compatible with the Microsoft equivalents.

On a related note, I use a text editor many times daily. When creating or editing plain text files, the power and bulk of a word processor is not necessary. But Notepad, the built-in Windows tool, is just a little smarter than a stone tablet. That's why I use NoteTab, a replacement for Notepad that does a lot more. It can open multiple files, has a variety of text searching and formatting options, and can use macros to automate repetitive tasks. NoteTab Light is free, and there are paid versions with additional powerful features.

Multimedia Tools: Microsoft Paint is okay for drawing lines, shapes and squiggles. You can even splash on some text with various fonts and colors. But perhaps the most useful feature is its Eraser. Fortunately, there are some free graphics and photo editing tools with features that rival even the expensive commercial options like Adobe Photoshop. Check out GIMP, IrfanView and other alternatives in Free Alternatives to Adobe Photoshop.

Similarly, the free Audacity software blows Sound Recorder out of the water. You can use it record audio, convert one audio format to another, make your own ringtones, record phone calls, and even Convert Vinyl Records to CD or MP3.

I'm just getting started really, but I don't want to overwhelm you with too many updates all at once. Look for a followup article "Essential Addons for Windows - Part Deux" real soon,

with tips on productivity, security, maintaining and customizing Windows, fixing common problems, and more.

Read more: http://askbobrankin.com/essential_addons_for_windows.html #ixzz 2gWxZRhZO

Quiz Answers

A. Multiple Choice

1. a) In a graphical user interface (GUI), an on-screen message box that presents information or requests input.
2. c) A hardware device that reads information on a disk and writes data to the disk for storage.
3. a), b) Fibre optics offers greater bandwidth and is virtually insusceptible to electromagnetic interference.
4. b) A large, powerful computer, capable of serving hundreds of connected terminals, used to meet the needs of large companies.
5. d) All of the above. There are three main types of interface; the command driven where the user types commands from the keyboard, a menu-driven interface using the keyboard or mouse to select from a menu on the screen, and a graphical user interface where the user selects and manipulates icons and pop-ups.

B. True or False

1. True
2. True. GUI (Graphical User Interface) allows one to choose icons on the window with either the keyboard or mouse. Simply, GUI allows you to select graphics to insert into documents.
3. FALSE. Special software that runs when the computer is first turned on. Manages communication between your hardware and software.
4. True. A display screen is divided into millions of tiny dots of light called pixels, arranged in rows and columns
5. False. The quality of the print is primarily determined by the RESOLUTION. More dots per inch mean higher resolution.
6. True. This is an e-mail protocol that is responsible for moving mail from mail server to mail server.
7. True. The right margins of a document are squared off without indentations.
8. False. To be 100% sure, pull the plug.
9. False. The Mother Board is the system unit circuit board that contains the microprocessor, memory and other chips
10. False. In LANDSCAPE the material is printed on paper that is turned horizontally.

C. Fill in the Blanks

1. LAN = Network. Abbreviation, for Local Area Network, a network of computers within the same building.
2. CPU = Microprocessor. Central Processing Unit-a microprocessor attached to the Mother Board.
3. Memory = RAM. Random Access Memory, the computer's electronic memory.
4. BIOS = Input/output system. A set of instructions in the ROM of most computer components that controls the transfer of data in and out.
5. CACHE = STORAGE. Temporary memory areas that help your computer or peripheral process information.

The Lighter Side

For reasons too involved and irrelevant to explain, a friend of mine had possession of a copy of a nasty program on a floppy. It would erase the entire hard drive of whatever computer it was loaded on. The floppy was labelled “INCREDIBLY DANGEROUS” and kept in a locked box at his store.

One day, a man he had hired to work in the store found it and popped it into the company’s computer and turned it on. Wouldn’t you know it – the hard drive was erased.

His explanation was, “I wanted to see what it would do.”

