

COMPUTER NEWS



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The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group will meet Wednesday, April 21st,

7:00-9:00 P.M.

At the Napa Senior Activity Center,
1500 Jefferson Street, Napa, California
Nick Cavannah from "Think! Ink" will be the giving
the main presentation



After meeting information by the President we will have our Random Access, an open-floor question-and-answer period during which attendees can ask questions about computers and computer-related problems and receive helpful information from other meeting attendees. Questions may be submitted before the meeting by emailing them to Random Access moderator **Jerry Brown** at Questions@nvpcug.org.



The Computer Tutor session will follow. During this months session Coordinator **Jeff Solomon** will be discussing Window 7 and what makes it different from Windows XP and Windows Vista. He will also answer any questions about Windows 7. If you have a suggestion on which feature he should discuss, please contact **Jeff Solomon** at tutor@nvpcug.org.



Our presenter will be Nick Cavanaugh from Think! Ink and Toner. They will be celebrating their third anniversary on Earth Day, April 22nd!

Think! Ink and Toner operates on a simple principle: we provide brand name aftermarket cartridges for your inkjet printer, laser printer, copy machine and fax machine that consistently provide the OEM quality and performance you expect, at significant savings over the price of a new OEM cartridge. Purchasing Think! cartridges makes good financial sense, and is also an environmentally friendly decision!

Ink on the Spot is a program for local businesses. It provides free product delivery and a comprehensive stock maintenance program that insures your business will never run out of ink & toner again.

Ink on the Spot is free to qualifying business, so give us a call and let us fill you in on all the details!



NVPCUG SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS & Mac Group

In SIG meetings you can learn about a subject in greater detail than is feasible at NVPCUG general meetings. SIG meetings are open to everyone. Meeting times and locations occasionally change, so for current meeting information, see our Web site, www.nvpcug.org, or contact the SIG leaders.

Investors SIG

Meets: Monthly, second Monday
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Jerry Brown's home,
23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa

Leader: Jerry Brown
(707) 254-9607

bqandjbb@sbcbglobal.net

Digital Photography SIG

Meets: Monthly, second Wednesday
7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
Piner's Nursing Home,
Conference Room
1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa

Leader: Susy Ball
(707) 337-3998

susyball@aol.com

Napa Valley Mac User Group

Meets: Monthly, second Thursday
6:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Napa Senior Activity Center
1500 Jefferson St., Napa

Leader: Ron Rogers
(707) 226-5352

ronrogersnapamug@gmail.com

Keep It Neat

While your home-theater might be the perfect spot for a movie night in, it may not always be up to your neatness standards, thanks to all of the cords and remotes you need to use it. Invest in a cord organizer to keep cords concealed, and to keep track of which is which, use colored tape to keep them straight. By attaching a thin strip around the cord and on the power strip, you'll always know which is which should you need to unplug something. And invest in a universal remote that controls all of your home-theater components, so you only have one to look for the next time you want to watch your favorite TV show.

Resize Vista's Recycle Bin

The Recycle Bin consumes a lot of hard drive space by default. You can control this by right-clicking Recycle Bin on your Desktop and clicking Properties. Select the drive you want to adjust, select the Custom Size radio button, type in the number of megabytes you want to reserve for the Recycle Bin in the appropriate field, and click Apply. Bear in mind that 1,024MB equals 1GB.

Keep It Steady

A shaky video can make your home videos difficult to watch. Many camcorders have image stabilization technology built in, but this still won't be a total cure for wobbly video. Consider purchasing a tripod for your camcorder or set it on something solid (such as a table or counter) to avoid movement.

Many pocket-sized camcorders and smartphones aren't compatible with a tripod, but there are some tricks you can use to steady your hands and your device. One trick is to push your elbows tightly to your sides and hold your camera at chest level to create a tripod with your body. You can also stand with your legs slightly wider than shoulder-width apart to create a solid, steady base.

Your video is more likely to show slight movement when you use the optical zoom to get a closer shot of your subjects. Rather than using the zoom to get a close-up shot, move yourself and the camera closer to the subject, if possible.

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NVPCUG General Meetings

Held the third Wednesday of each month, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa

NVPCUG Calendar

Apr 21	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting + A
May 5	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Board of Directors meeting + B
May 10	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting + C
May 12	7:00-8:30 p.m.	Digital Photography SIG meeting + B
May 13	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Napa Valley Mac User Group + A
May 19	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting + A
Jun 2	7:00-9:00 p.m.	Board of Directors meeting + B
Jun 9	7:00-8:30 p.m.	Digital Photography SIG meeting + B
Jun 10	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Napa Valley Mac User Group + A
Jun 14	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting + C
Jun 16	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting + A

Meeting Locations

- A - Napa Senior Activity Center,
1500 Jefferson Street, Napa
- B - Piner's Nursing Home,
1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
- C - Jerry Brown's home,
23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa
- D - Peterson's Family Christmas
Tree Farm, 1120 Darms
Lane, Napa.

Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group Contact Information

Officers for 2010

Board of Directors

President	Ron Dack	unlisted	President@nvpcug.org
Vice President	Dick Peterson	738-1812	VicePresident@nvpcug.org
Secretary	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Secretary@nvpcug.org
Treasurer	Roy Wagner	253-2721	Treasurer@nvpcug.org
Other Directors:	Susy Ball, Ron Dack, Jim Gray, Dick Peterson, Bob Simmerman, Kathy Slavens, Dean Unruh, Marcia Waddell, and Roy Wagner.		
Director	Jim Gray	unlisted	Director_Gray@nvpcug.org

Appointed Officers

Computer Tutor Coordinator	Jeff Solomon	553-2114	Tutor@nvpcug.org
Facility Arrangements Coordinator	Dianne Prior	252-1506	Facility@nvpcug.org
Greeter Coordinator	Kathy Slavens	251-9193	Greeter@nvpcug.org
Greeter Coordinator	Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Greeter2@nvpcug.org
Librarian	Dean Unruh	226-9164	Librarian@nvpcug.org
Membership Director	Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Membership@nvpcug.org
Newsletter Circulator	Jim Hearn	224-2540	Circulation@nvpcug.org
Newsletter Editor	Susy Ball	337-3998	Editor@nvpcug.org
Product Review CoCoordinator	Susy Ball	337-3998	Reviews@nvpcug.org
Product Review CoCoordinator	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Reviews2@nvpcug.org
Programs Director	Susy Ball	337-3998	Programs@nvpcug.org
Publicity Director	Ron Dack	unlisted	Publicity@nvpcug.org
Random Access Moderator	Jerry Brown	254-9607	Questions@nvpcug.org
Special Projects Director	VOLUNTEER NEEDED		Projects@nvpcug.org
Webmaster	Ron Dack	unlisted	Webmaster@nvpcug.org

• All telephone numbers are in Area Code 707.

NVPCUG Computer News

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Interesting Sites

Provided by Sierra Tel Internet

Cruisin' for Trip Tips

<http://cruise critic.com> - Considering a cruise? Whether you're an experienced or novice cruiser, this detailed site can help you plan your trip. Find the best cruise for you by destination, lifestyle, cruise line, or price. Read features about weather, dietary restrictions, safety, trends, and more. Communicate with other cruisers on the message boards. And don't forget to read the expert cruise reviews for advice from the pros.

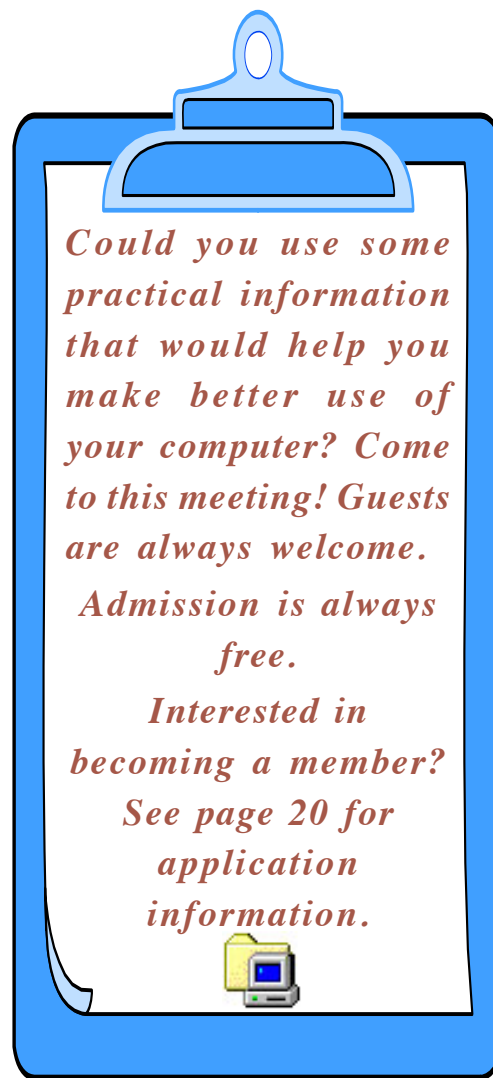
Hot Site for Chili Lovers

<http://chilicookoff.com> - This is the online home of the International Chili Society (ICS). Cookoffs take place throughout the world, and winners are qualified to compete at the World's Championship Chili Cookoff held each year in October. Check out the site to read about cookoff winners dating back to 1967 and get some of their chili recipes to try at home. It's a sure recipe to heat up cold days.

Tour a Dream Home for Inspiration

<http://hgtv.com/dream-home/index.html> - It never hurts to dream big, and this site lets you experience the HGTV Dream Home 2010 in multiple ways. View the floor plan, watch videos, get a feel for life in New Mexico (where the home is located), or take a room-by-room tour. Check out the blog to learn even more about this contemporary Pueblo-style home. And if you like what you see, visit the Products section to find pieces to make your own home a little dreamier. ■

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Southwest Computer Conference

June 4, 5 & 6, 2010
Town and Country Resort & Convention Center
San Diego, CA

Vendor-sponsored presentations & meals
Welcome Bag full of goodies
20+ Workshops / Vendor tech sessions
Up close & personal time with vendors at the Expo
Interact with officers & members from over 60 computer clubs!

Early Bird
Registration by 5/15
\$75.00

Visit www.theswcc.org
for more information



Marcia Waddell
and
Susy Ball
will attend,
will you?

Caution! - Warning

About Counterfeit & Pirated Software

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According to a recent report from Microsoft®, the number of customers who unknowingly purchased counterfeit and pirated Microsoft software has risen dramatically over the last two years. This software poses a serious risk to security since studies around the world have shown that a high percentage of illegally copied or downloaded software contains spyware, malware, or other malicious code. Consumers who are duped by fraudulent software can encounter viruses, lose personal information, risk having their identities stolen, and waste valuable time and money.

Worse yet, today's counterfeiters are often large criminal syndicates that don't stop at distributing hundreds of copies of unlicensed software. Software pirates are likely to create botnets, which are armies of compromised computers controlled by cybercriminals and used to perform a host of illegal Internet activities.

Here are some tips to help you avoid buying counterfeit software:

1. Take the time to fully research the products you are buying and from whom you get them. Read reviews and talk to retailers so you build a knowledgeable perspective.
2. If the price seems too good to be true, it probably is. Buy from a reputable source such as a major retailer or other recognized reseller.
3. Look for spelling mistakes on the software package or a shoddy appearance.
4. Make sure software products are licensed. It is standard that every legal piece of software includes a developer's license agreement.
5. If you're unsure if a product is legitimate, call the manufacturer.

Microsoft has launched an education campaign to help you recognize counterfeit and pirated software, and know if you're purchasing genuine products. For more information, visit their "How to Tell" site at

<http://microsoft.com:80/howtotell>.

“Disk Failure” Scare

By Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida, www.spcug.org,
president@spcug.org

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This morning, it happened again. I started the computer in the morning, as I do every morning, and staring me in the face was the dreaded “system disk failure” message. A chill went down my spine. It seemed like this happened only about a year or two years ago. When I thought further, it was 2005 when it happened, almost 5 years ago, so maybe that’s not too bad. As I ate breakfast, I rapidly thought about the hardware in that computer. (I currently have 3 desktops that I am using for various activities in the home, but this was my main computer, the one other family members use.) Panic started to set-in. Were the disk drives 160GB, or 250GB? When were they installed? Were they Seagate or Western Digital? What interface is used in that computer? Are they formatted in NTFS or FAT32? Well, if it was the C: drive then it must be NTFS. I’ll have to open the chassis and look at the drives. Fortunately, this story has a very happy ending. After breakfast, as I knelt down to look at the desktop chassis, to see what was the best approach to removing the cables and other things around the chassis, I spied a floppy disk in the floppy disk drive. Eureka! XP was trying to boot from the floppy: an impossible task, so it reported a disk failure, obviously. Most desktop computers today don’t have a floppy disk drive, so this will probably not happen to most people. However, it got me thinking that the answers to all of the questions I had during breakfast, should be in one place, probably along with a lot of other information that defines the current computer hardware setup. So it’s probably not a bad idea to gather all of this information, while the computer is operating, and put a hard copy printout in a safe place. The disk drive information is probably the most important for this kind of failure, but it is a good idea to have all the basic hardware information in one easily accessed place. Here is a list of the things that you might want to have. You may not need all of these so use only those that are pertinent to your hardware setup. (If there’s anything that I’ve forgotten, just add it to the list, and let me know by e-mail.) I’ll start with the disk drive information because that is what you’ll need if the drive goes down, or you may need if you have to re-install the entire system. (By the way, you can accomplish all of this by using the free program, Belarc Advisor (http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html). Belarc produces a listing of almost all of the following pieces of information and additional information in the computer security area.)

Disk Drive 1

- Manufacturer Typically Seagate, Western Digital,...
- Part Number e.g. ST3160023A (Seagate part no.)
- Date Installed May be the date of computer purchase
- Size (GB) e.g. 330GB
- Rotating Speed e.g. 7200 RPM (or possibly 5400 RPM)
- Interface Type IDE (Parallel ATA) or SATA
- Formatted NTFS or FAT32
- C: drive size Typically 25GB (for XP) or 50GB (Vista)
- D: drive size (if used) Various

Disk Drive 2

- Same as Drive 1

CPU

- Type e.g. Intel Pentium 4, or AMD Athlon
- Speed e.g. 3.2 GHz
- Processors e.g. 2 Only used for multi-core processors (e.g. Intel Core Duo)

Memory

- Amount e.g. 1GB
- Type/Speed e.g. PC133 or DDR2, etc.

Display Adapter (If not on Motherboard)

- Manufacturer e.g. nVidia
- Part Number e.g. GeForce GTX295
- Other Information if needed.

Networking

- Computer Name e.g. “Mary’s Computer”
- Wired MAC address (if connected to wired Ethernet port) e.g. 00-34-5A-BC-DF-3F
- Wireless MAC address (if used on wireless network) e.g. 00-34-5A-BC-DF-3F
- Router IP address e.g. 192.168.1.0

USB Devices

- MP3Player e.g. Apple iPod
 - Part Number e.g.
 - Size e.g. 4GB
 - Other Pertinent Information

External Drive (for Backup)

- o Manufacturer e.g. Seagate, Western Digital, LaCie
- o Part Number Free Agent (Seagate part no.)
- o Date Installed May be the date of computer purchase
- o Size (GB) e.g. 1 TB (1,000 GB)
- o Rotating Speed Typically 7200 RPM
- o Formatted NTFS or FAT32

Mouse and/or Keyboard (if connected to USB)

Digital Camera

- o Manufacturer e.g. Cannon
- o Part Number e.g. Powershot SX110IS
- o MegaPixel size e.g. 10MPixels
- o Other Pertinent Information

Other USB Devices

Partial Belarc Advisor Pintout:

BELARC Advisor


The license associated with the Belarc Advisor product allows for **free personal use only**. Use on multiple computers in a corporate, educational, military or government installation is prohibited. See the [license agreement](#) for data. The information on this page was created locally on your computer by the Belarc Advisor. Your computer profile is not sent to a web server. [Click here for more info.](#)


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System Security Status

CIS Benchmark Score
 **1.25 of 10** ([details...](#))

Virus Protection
 Up-to-date

Microsoft Security Updates
 8 missing

Computer Profile Summary

Computer Name: Desktop2 (in B) — FrontRoom
 Profile Date: Saturday, January 02, 2010 9:40:47 AM
 Advisor Version: 8.1e
 Windows Logon: MainUser

[Plan for your next computer refresh...
 click for Belarc's System Management products](#)

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[Software Versions & Usage new](#)

[Missing Hotfixes](#)

[Installed Hotfixes](#)

Operating System	System Model
Windows XP Professional Service Pack 3 (build 2600) Install Language: English (United States) System Locale: English (United States)	Enclosure Type: Desktop
Processor ^a	Main Circuit Board ^b
3.20 gigahertz Intel Pentium 4 16 kilobyte primary memory cache 1024 kilobyte secondary memory cache Hyper-threaded (2 total)	Board: Gigabyte Technology Co., Ltd. SIPE1000P-G Bus Clock: 200 megahertz BIOS: Award Software International, Inc. F4 09/06/2004
Drives	Memory Modules ^{c,d}
320.00 Gigabytes Usable Hard Drive Capacity 91.05 Gigabytes Hard Drive Free Space _NEC DVD_RW ND-3520A [CD-ROM drive] SONY DVD-ROM DDU1613 [CD-ROM drive] 3.5" format removeable media [Floppy drive] ST3160023A [Hard drive] (160.04 GB) -- drive 1, s/n 4LJ0T7GW, rev 8.01, SMART Status: Healthy ST3160023A [Hard drive] (160.04 GB) -- drive 0, s/n 5LJ1FYHX, rev 8.01, SMART Status: Healthy	1024 Megabytes Usable Installed Memory Slot 'A0' has 512 MB Slot 'A1' is Empty Slot 'A2' has 512 MB Slot 'A3' is Empty
	Local Drive Volumes
	c: (NTFS on drive 0) 26.22 GB 5.38 GB free d: (FAT32 on drive 0) 133.78 GB 38.98 GB free e: (FAT32 on drive 1) 159.99 GB 46.69 GB free



Circuit WriterVersion 7.3

By Jim Scheef, Director, Danbury Area Computer Society, CT, www.dacs.org,
jscheef@dacs.org

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Come On, Let's Get Real

Not too long ago, I subscribed to Wired Magazine. I've read Wired on and off over the years and thought it would be fun to get it again, so I did a deal for Wired in exchange for a few airline miles. Naturally this was online. I have yet to receive my first issue, but I have begun to receive email marketing. The first ad was for GQ Magazine and those of you who attend the general meetings can attest that my fashion quotient is an absolute zero and I have even less interest in GQ.

This is not SPAM; I subscribed to Wired and GQ is another Condé Nast publication, so I click the link at the bottom of the email "to remove this e-mail address from future Wired e-mail promotions". The resulting web page allows me to remove my email address, or not, from both Wired and GQ marketing. I choose both and click Submit. The confirmation is below:

- Thanks! Please allow 10 business days for your subscription for Wired to be removed.
- Thanks! Please allow 10 business days for your subscription for GQ to be removed.

Can you believe this? Ten days! How are they updating the database? By snail mail? A one day lag I can see, but ten? And they call themselves Wired...

The Droid Does

Please forgive me if this column seems a little narcissistic, but I don't buy a new toy every day. After a year of waiting for an iPhone that works on Verizon, the Droid has appeared instead. So I bought one. The Droid is a new smartphone to compete with the Apple iPhone. The Droid is manufactured by Motorola and is available only on Verizon.

It took four tries to get the transaction thru on the Verizon Wireless website on the Friday it was released. Because I have been off contract for several years (I saw no need to "upgrade" my old Motorola E-815 phone), I was eligible for the "New every 2" sucker deal. For the Droid this meant an additional \$100 off after the \$100 online discount which brought the phone down to a relatively affordable \$99⁹⁹ – fifty bucks less than a refurbished 3GS and no one else's DNA to wipe off!

The last step in the order process is the dreaded "confirm" step. After that click, the website displays a nearly blank screen with a revolving arrow thing in the middle and a

message that this could take a few minutes. I let one of them run for half an hour before closing the browser window. So that evening I called Verizon to see if any of my orders had gone thru. None had, but the pleasant customer service lady said she would have the phone order people honor the online price. I suspect the phone order guy worked on commission because he was not as friendly. When he told me that I would have to pay for the overnight shipping that was free on the website, I started to enter another web order and, lo and behold, it completes right away. Sorry phone order guy.

So on Monday morning I'm headed for a client site and meet my FedEx driver at the bottom of the hill. He recognizes my car and stops to tell me he has a package for me and it requires my signature. Always be nice to your delivery people so they will be nice to you!

So why get a Droid (short for Android, the Linux-based operating system from Google) and not an iPhone? Well, only time will tell if I made the right decision but the number one reason I did not buy an iPhone 3GS when it came out is AT&T's lousy 3G coverage in New Milford. Even the phone service has gaps. The AT&T coverage map shows only three small spots with 3G in New Milford. One is the AT&T store and I cannot figure why the other two exist but none correspond to where I live or do anything. As we discussed during AskDACS a few months back, AT&T has no 3G service on the New Milford green which you might expect to be a prime target. On the other hand, Verizon's 3G coverage pretty much covers the state. If there is cell service, then 3G works as well. I knew this from my old phone which could use 3G services but to which I never subscribed. [Who would want to watch a movie on a 2-inch screen?]

The Droid offers features that the iPhone lacks – like a slide-out physical keyboard, replaceable battery and easily expandable memory (a 16GB microSD card is included). So is the Droid an iPhone killer? In a word – no. But it is a credible device with good support thru Google and the Android open source community. Top of the list of missing items is the multi-touch screen. You zoom in the Droid browser by touching the screen, a plus/minus thing appears and then you hit one side or the other. This is not as good by about seven miles. Also, the keyboard does not autocomplete words as you type so every word must be typed completely with the attendant opportunity for errors. Fortunately the excellent 3.7-inch 854x480 pixel screen makes it easy to see



the mistakes. There is a self-proclaimed detailed comparison of the two devices on Technically Personal (tinyurl.com/yhd5mkm) and another on GadgetoPhilia (tinyurl.com/yz6zy35). Google users will appreciate the tight integration of the Droid (and probably all Android devices) with Google. Since I have not been a Googler, this is just another learning curve for me. For instance, I had to finally break down and create a Gmail account. What I will do with yet another email address remains to be seen but a Gmail account seems to be required to use the phone.

The iPhone App Store has been the key thing (in my opinion) driving iPhone sales. Android is the only other smartphone operating system with an established supply of applications and a means to deliver them – the Android Market which is run by Google. I have no idea how many apps are available (a news item says more than 10,000) but the number of iPhone apps exceeds this by an order of magnitude. Nevertheless, it took me several hours to scroll thru a few categories of just the free Android apps. By the end of the first evening playing with the Droid my scroll finger was tired and sore. During this period I learned that not all Android apps will run on all Android devices. The Droid runs the brand new version 2 of the Android OS and this alone is sufficient to cause some apps to “close unexpectedly”. To the credit of the OS, only once did a crash leave the phone in an unstable condition. Another difference from the iPhone is the ability to install apps directly to the phone. Significant hacking is required to get around Apple’s lock on applications. On the Droid, this is an option in Setup along with the ability to turn on debugging and developer tools. The only significant security block I’ve found so far is the lack of root access. This won’t last long now that the device is out. All other Android devices have been “rooted” and unlike with Apple and the iPhone there has been no attempt by Google or the manufacturers to prevent this hacking. Another plus for the Droid, in my opinion. Now that there is a higher volume Android device, I predict that the number of available apps will grow as existing iPhone apps are ported to Android and Linux developers jump on the mobile bandwagon.

Integration of my personal software tools with the Droid is coming along but I still need to carry my old and dying Windows Pocket PC PDA for contacts and calendar because I have not installed the software needed to synchronize the Droid with Exchange. That’s next once I finish this column, AskDACS and SIG notes. Another major stumbling block is passwords. I use RoboForm (roboform.com) on all of my PCs and the PDA to encrypt passwords on websites and web-managed devices like routers. I have 413 passwords in 20 folders that I will need on the Droid. More on this next month. ■

Editor’s Note : *I just got a DROID myself, I just love it!*



Refilling Ink Cartridges

Replacement ink cartridges are expensive. The total cost of ink often far exceeds the cost of the printer itself. Rather than purchasing manufacturer’s replacement cartridges, many printer users opt for refill kits as a less expensive alternative. Replacement ink is drawn into a small syringe and then slowly injected into the cartridge’s spongy ink-retaining material through a fill hole. While this technique can save significant money over the life of a printer, you can only refill the cartridges themselves several times. Eventually, the old cartridge will quit. Plan to replace the ink cartridge with a factory-fresh unit every three to five refills. If the refilled cartridge fails, you can always use the syringe to remove the added ink and return it to the supply bottle.

Laser Printer Paper Problem

To remove a paper jam from your printer, open the front panel of the printer. Your printer’s users guide, user CD with flash animation, or an illustration on the printer can show you how to do so. Remove the toner cartridge from the printer and hold it horizontal to the floor to keep the toner from spilling. Place it on a disposable sheet of paper to confine any loose toner. Once you find the paper jam, gradually pull the paper out so that you don’t tear the jammed page. If the page can’t be moved, look for illustrations next to the rollers that indicate how to manually advance the paper. Should the paper rip, remove all the torn pieces, or they may jam the printer again.

Macros

If you’re using a compact camera, you’ll likely be limited to its onboard capabilities regarding magnification and focusing at close distances. However, many of them also have macro presets that let you get as close as an inch away from your subject. Just be sure to frame your shot using the display screen rather than the optical viewfinder, if the camera has one. On a compact model, the viewfinder sees things from a slightly different perspective than the lens. When you’re extremely close to your subject, a shot that looks properly framed in the view-finder will end up shifted over and down, perhaps cutting off part of the subject.

Display The IE Address Bar List

To quickly display the Address Bar list in Internet Explorer, press F4. You’ll see a list of previously entered URLs, so you can quickly backtrack to a site you visited earlier.

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Glary Utilities

By Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://www.glaryutilities.com>

One of the common themes in this column is improving computer performance. I still hear on a regular basis about slow performance and other PC problems that may have an easy and possibly free solution.

I emphasize free not just because of today's trying economic times, but also because an acquaintance of mine recently paid a big box store \$300 to clean up his hard drive in order to improve his PC's performance. There are many utilities available at varying prices from free to many dollars, and like anything else in society, they vary in quality from mediocre or worse, to excellent. The trite cliché "You get what you pay for" does not always apply when it comes to computer software, as there is some excellent quality free software available.



I have worked on several decrepit computers in recent weeks, and had the opportunity to try software utilities from several publishers, and found some that I really liked. Some of

the titles that I found that worked very well were freeware utilities from Glarysoft, www.glarysoft.com.

The first Glarysoft utility that I tried on an older XP machine that was in desperate need of some software maintenance was its flagship product Glary Utilities. Available in 23 languages from www.glaryutilities.com, Glarysoft claims that this product is, "... the #1 free, powerful and all-in-one utility in the world market! It offers numerous powerful and easy-to-use system tools and utilities to fix, speed up, maintain and protect your PC." I cannot vouch for the #1 status, but I did find it a capable utility that does all that it claims, and it does it very well. Available in two flavors, the free version, and a \$40 commercial version, Glary Utilities PRO, either will have enough features to likely improve the performance of any dragging PC. Obviously the PRO version offers more features than the free version, such as automatic care in background; enhanced system fixing, optimizing and more; free 24x7 technical support, and may be used



commercially. Both versions will run well on most modern PCs, and is compatible with Windows 2000, XP 32/64bit and Vista 32/64bit. I ran Glary utilities on the old XP, as well as a new Vista 64 machine, and it ran flawlessly on both.



Glary Utilities has a clean and intuitive front end, and is easy to use. The opening window gives the version and status, and a link to download any updates. The "1-Click Maintenance", which can be scheduled or run on demand, offers six automated clean-up functions which can be run together or individually. The "Registry Cleaner", which can fix invalid or incorrect registry entries, is one of the best in the business, and may reduce the number of conflicts and "blue screens of death" that antagonize many of us. The "Shortcuts Fixer" identifies and cleans any invalid shortcuts that may have been left over when deleting old programs. The "Startup Manager" may be one of the keys to improved PC performance by stopping useless and unnecessary programs from automatically loading when the computer is booted. These unnecessary programs often get inserted in the startup when their software is installed, and may be a terrible resource hog. degrade performance. cause slow boots

The screenshot shows the Glarysoft website with a navigation menu (Home, Products, Download, Purchase, Support, Company) and a main content area. The main content area features several product listings with "Read more" and "Download" buttons. The products listed are Glary Utilities (100% freeware), Glary Utilities PRO (30-day full function trial), Glary Undelete (100% freeware), Registry Repair (100% freeware), and Absolute Uninstaller (100% freeware). Each listing includes a brief description of the product's features and benefits.

and shutdowns, and create software conflicts. By easily managing the startup process, the user has better control of the computer as well as better performance. Massive amounts of hard drive capacity are often wasted by having thousands of temporary files from various sources eating up the capacity of the drive; a “Temporary Files Cleaner” cleans up these temporary files, and recovers the wasted hard drive space; one computer I recently cleaned had over 4 gigs of useless temporary files, which this program detected and deleted. Our personal privacy may be jeopardized by leaving internet tracks and traces on our hard drive, and the integral “Tracks Eraser” detects and removes these items, helping to maintain the users’ privacy. The final “1-Click” utility is a “Spyware Remover”, which can detect and remove much of the spyware which may infest the computer. These six

defragmentation utility. Besides the already described benefits of the startup manager, the registry defrag feature would probably be the most beneficial utility in this group. Since the registry is constantly being written to and modified, gaps appear in its structure which can slow its reading, waste processing power, as well as take up extra space on the hard drive; the registry defrag function resolves this problem.



Next is a privacy and security selection which includes the already mentioned tracks eraser, as well as three other utilities. Sometimes it is necessary to permanently delete files and data, such that

they are unrecoverable; the integral file shredder erases files such that they are gone forever. Unless a file has been shredded or overwritten on the hard drive, it may very likely be recoverable. We all have accidentally deleted files, or changed our minds after deleting files, and wished that we could get them back; the file undelete utility can quickly and effectively recover files that had been accidentally deleted. Some other files that we have may also be personally sensitive, and made safe from prying eyes. The “File Encrypter and Decrypter” protects files from unauthorized access and use.

The “Files & Folders” group includes utilities to analyze and the hard disk structure, detect and delete duplicate files, find and remove empty file folders, and a neat utility that can split large files into smaller ones and then rejoin them when needed.

The final module is the “System Tools” selection where the running processes on the computer can be monitored and stopped as desired, freeing up computing power. Another system tool manages Internet Explorer add-ons, tool bars, and other functions, and can recover from a high jacked browser. The final utility opens Window’s own secretive tools utility, providing user access to dozens of Window’s settings, allowing the user to tweak the operating system as desired.

I found Glary Utilities, both the free version and the more comprehensive PRO version to be useful and effective in improving PC performance, and maintaining that enhanced functionality. I would recommend that users download the PRO version, as it offers a fully functional 30 day free trial, and see how well it performs. If satisfied, then the \$40 purchase price may be well worth it. For those who prefer free software, the free version would be very satisfactory, as it also is a very capable product. For those who want the functionality of the individual modules as free standing products, many of them are available for free download from www.glarysoft.com. Glary Soft has some fine products, and would be a worthwhile addition to the stable of utilities that we all should have and utilize. ■

The screenshot shows the Glary Utilities website. At the top, it claims to be the "#1 free, powerful and all-in-one utility in the world market!". The main heading is "Glary Utilities". Below this, there are several bullet points listing features: "Optimize, clean and boost the speed of your Windows.", "Protect your privacy and security.", "Block spyware, trojans, adware, etc.", "Fix certain application errors.", "Simple, fast and User friendly interface", and "For only private use". There are also sections for "Speed up your Slow PC Now" and "Windows Tuning". The website provides download links for various versions (No-Toolbar, Portable) and lists technical specifications like "Current Version: 2.15.0.728", "File Size: 5.76 MB", "Release Date: Aug. 03, 2009", "Platform: Windows 7, 2000, XP, Vista. 32/64-bit version.", and "Languages: 23 Languages (Help Translate)". A testimonial from Tracy Miller is also visible, praising the software for fixing PC issues.

tasks, all of which can be run with a single mouse click, can do much to improve PC performance.

For those users who want even more power and control coupled with additional performance improvements should choose the “Modules” tab. Five modules, each consisting of several system tools, provide an excellent selection of resources designed to provide the maximum improvement of performance, short of hardware upgrades. The “Clean Up & Repair” button connects to the disk cleaner, the registry cleaner, shortcuts fixer, and an uninstall manager. While two of these utilities are automatically invoked when selecting the 1-Click option, the disk cleaner detects and removes far more clutter on the hard drive than the simple temp files remover. The uninstall manager allows the user to completely remove any unwanted programs more thoroughly than Microsoft’s “Add/Remove” feature.

The second module contains four utilities to optimize and improve performance, including the startup manager, a memory optimizer, a context menu manager (a tool for techies and geeks), and a registry

This and That or Things that May Interest You

By Lynn Page, Editor Crystal River Users Group, Florida, www.crug.com,
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Windows 7

Shake

Minimize all windows but one whit shake, click and hold down on the title bar and shake to maximize that windows and minimize all others. Shake again to restore all.

Snap

Snap can display two windows side by side with each filling half of the screen. With one window active press and hold the Windows key while hitting the left or right arrow key. The window snaps to that side. Do the same with the other window but press the other arrow key while holding the Windows key down.

To maximize a window with press and hold down the Windows key while hitting the up arrow key. To restore the window hold the Windows key and hit the down arrow button.

Snipping Tool

The snipping tool has been improved in Windows 7. You can snip a whole window, a rectangular section of the screen, or draw a freehand outline with your mouse or tablet pen. You can save it as a graphic file or annotate with basic drawing tools. And you no longer have the red snipping border.



Windows Mail

Windows Mail can handle a variety of different accounts. So you can set up a single personal email account, or add a work or other personal accounts and even newsgroups. With multiple accounts I like to put each account in a separate folder.

Add a User Account

In Windows Mail click Accounts in the Tools drop down menu. Click the Add button select the type of account to

add, click Next, and then follow the instructions inputting the logon and server information for the email account.

Delete a User Account

In Windows Mail click Accounts in the Tools drop down menu. Select the account to remove and then click Remove.



Blocked Email Attachments

To protect your computer from file attachments that are commonly used to spread email viruses Windows Mail blocks certain types of files, like: .exe, .pif, and .scr files. When Windows Mail blocks an attachment, the Information bar displays a message notifying you and listing the attachment that was blocked.

To access blocked attachments close the message with the attachment. Then in the Tools drop down menu select Options. Click the Security tab and clear the Do not allow Attachments to be saved or opened that could potentially be a virus check box. Next reopen the message. Once you access the attachment it is better to repeat the process and block the attachments again.

Junk Mail Folder

Windows Mail's junk email filter is designed to catch obvious spam and move them to the Junk e mail folder. helps manage your Inbox to keep it free of unwanted email.

Change the Junk Email Protection Level

In the Tools drop down menu click Junk e mail Options and set the protection level you want:

Move a Message from the Junk Email Folder to the Inbox

Open the Junk email folder and select the message to move to the Inbox. In the toolbar point to Junk email and click Mark as Not Junk in the drop down menu. The message is moved to your Inbox.

Add Sender to the Blocked Senders List

Select a message from the sender to add to the Blocked Senders list. On the toolbar point to Junk email and then

click Add Sender to Blocked Senders List. This blocks all future messages from that specific sender.

Add Sender to the Safe Senders List

Select a message from the sender to add to the Safe Senders list. On the toolbar point to Junk email, and then click Add Sender to Safe Senders List. This allows all future messages from that specific sender.

Correct File Associations

If files are opening in the wrong application find one of the files and right click it. Then in Windows Vista, select Open With and then Choose Default Program. From the list of programs select the program to use. Or Browse to add a program to the list. Click to check the Always use the selected program to open this kind of file box and then click OK. In Windows XP, after right clicking the file select Open With. Then find the program to use. or Browse to find another program. Again, check Always use the selected program to open this kind of file and click OK.

Remove Your Phone Number from Searches

Google

Search to find your listing in Google's PhoneBook. Then go to Google's online PhoneBook Name Removal form and enter the information as it appeared in the Google listing.



WhitePages.com

Find your listing on WhitePages.com. and at the bottom of your listing click the small link that for "Is this you? Remove your listing." Confirm the remove request.

Yahoo

Find your listing using Yahoo!'s People Search. Then use the online Remove Phone Listing form and enter your name as it appears in the listing.

Switchboard.com

Find your listing by searching Switchboard. Click the Remove this listing link beside the listing and provide your email address.



Office 2007 Format Painter

The Format Painter is an easy way to copy formatting you want to duplicate on other text. Select the text to copy the format from, click the Format Painter button and then select the text to format. To apply the same formatting to more than one item, select the text with the formatting, double-click Format Painter, and then select each word, phrase, or paragraph you want to apply formatting to. When finished, click the Format Painter again or press ESC. Format Painter is available in most Office programs.

Create a Theme from a Document

Themes are a valuable asset in Word and other Office files. A theme is a combination of theme colors, theme fonts, and theme effects. When you have generated a document with just the perfect formatting you may want to use it again. So save the formatting as a custom theme. With the document open on the Page Layout tab, in the Themes group, click Themes. At the bottom of the menu, click Save Current Theme. Provide a file name and click save.

Use a Theme from another Document

If you didn't create a theme from a document you can still use it as a theme for a new document. Open the document that you want to apply a different theme to and on the Page Layout tab, in the Themes group, click Themes. At the bottom of the menu, click Browse for Themes. In the Choose Theme or Themed Document dialog box, select the 2007 Office document that contains the theme to apply, and click Open. ■

Solar Power

Solar panels aren't just for the roof of your house. Now, solar-powered electronics and accessories are produced with eco-conscious features, designed to harness the power of the sun. Laptop cases, Bluetooth car kits, and radios with built-in solar panels help your devices stay charged via the sun's energy.

Can This PMP Play My Movie?

Incompatible file formats have been a sore spot with PMP (portable media player) owners for years. Although some PMP makers include software that will transcode a file into a format their player supports, it pays to make certain the PMP you buy supports the formats of the majority of the files you already own. If most of your video library's files are in the MPEG-4 format, for example, check to make sure that the PMP you're eyeing supports MPEG-4 files natively or be prepared to transcode those files (an often time-consuming process) in order to watch them.

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Short Tutorial - Changing The Sound Of Email Notification



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You probably enjoy having the freedom to change the ring tone on your phone to suit your personality and preferences. Well, you have a similar opportunity to change the sound you hear when new email arrives on your computer. Just follow the steps below for your email program and operating system:

Changing the Sound of New Email Notification Using:

Email Program: Outlook Express 6, Mozilla Thunderbird, or Windows Live Mail

Computer Operating System: Windows XP

1. Select "Control Panel" from the "Start" menu. (Make sure you are in "Classic View.")
2. Double-click on the "Sounds and Audio Devices" icon.
3. The Sounds and Audio Devices Properties window will open. Click on the "Sounds" tab.
4. Highlight "New Mail Notification" in the "Program Events" list.
5. In the "Sounds:" field, select a sound from the drop-down list, or use the "Browse" button to find a sound not in the list. To assist you in selecting a sound, click on the "Play" button next to the drop-down list to listen to a sound of interest.
6. When you have made your selection, click on "Apply" and then the "OK" button to accept and save your changes.



Changing the Sound of New Email Notification Using:

Email Program: Windows Mail, Mozilla Thunderbird, or Windows Live Mail

Computer Operating System: Windows Vista

1. Select "Control Panel" from the "Start" menu. (Make sure you are in "Classic View.")
2. Double-click on the "Sound" icon.
3. The Sound window will open. Click on the "Sounds" tab.
4. Highlight "New Mail Notification" in the "Program" list.
5. In the "Sounds:" field, select a sound from the drop-down list, or use the "Browse" button to find a sound not in the list. To assist you in selecting a sound, click on the "Test" button to listen to a sound of interest.

6. When you have made your selection, click on "Apply" and then the "OK" button to accept and save your changes.

Changing the Sound of New Email Notification Using:

Email Program: Windows Live Mail or Mozilla Thunderbird

Computer Operating System: Windows 7

1. Select "Control Panel" from the "Start" menu.
2. Double-click on the "Sound" icon. (If you see only a few categories instead of dozens of icons, change "View by" from "Category" to "Large icons".)
3. The Sound window will open. Click on the "Sounds" tab.
4. Highlight "New Mail Notification" in the "Program" list.
5. In the "Sounds:" field, select a sound from the drop-down list, or use the "Browse" button to find a sound not in the list. To assist you in selecting a sound, click on the "Test" button to listen to a sound of interest.
6. When you have made your selection, click on "Apply" and then the "OK" button to accept and save your changes.



Changing the Sound of New Email Notification Using:

Email Program: Mail.app

Computer Operating System: Mac OS X 10.5

1. With Mail.app open, click your cursor arrow on the "Mail" menu and select "Preferences" from the resulting drop-down menu.
2. When the Preferences window opens, select the "General" tab by clicking on its icon.
3. Click on the drop-down button next to "New mail sound." A drop-down menu listing all the sounds in your system will appear.
4. Select a sound and the sound will play. Keep making selections and listening to sounds until you find the one you like best.

5. Once you have made your final sound selection, close the Preferences window to save your changes.

Changing the Sound of New Email Notification Using:

Email Program: Mozilla Thunderbird

Computer Operating System: Mac OS X 10.5



1. With Mozilla Thunderbird open, click your cursor arrow on the “Thunderbird” menu and select “Preferences” from the resulting drop-down menu.
2. When the Preferences window opens, select the “General” tab by clicking on its icon.
3. In the “When new messages arrive” section, select “Use the following sound file”.
4. Click on the “Browse” button.
5. Navigate to and select the sound file you want to use, then click the “Open” button. Click the “Play” button if you want to test the file.
6. Close the Preferences window to save your changes. ■

Buy A Compact Video Recorder

Compact video recorders are designed for capturing spontaneous moments whenever and wherever they occur. These devices all feature a small camcorder design, generally weigh less than 6 ounces, and can fit as comfortably in your pocket as in your hand. When shopping, favor models that let you film and operate the device with a single hand. Also consider how easy it is to take the device with you wherever you go.

Another feature to focus on is the built-in or expandable storage. Compact video recorders generally rely on flash memory, the same kind found in thumb drives; it’s very reliable, solid state (no moving parts), and unlikely to be damaged if dropped. The amount of memory, such as 2, 4, or 8GB, in the device determines how much video you can record, so get a model with as much memory as you can afford. Expandable memory slots, for extra memory cards such as SD (Secure Digital) cards, are a nice feature to have, especially for devices lacking plentiful integrated storage.

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Caution! - Warning About

Counterfeit And Pirated Software

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According to a recent report from Microsoft®, the number of customers who unknowingly purchased counterfeit and pirated Microsoft software has risen dramatically over the last two years. This software poses a serious risk to security since studies around the world have shown that a high percentage of illegally copied or downloaded software contains spyware, malware, or other malicious code. Consumers who are duped by fraudulent software can encounter viruses, lose personal information, risk having their identities stolen, and waste valuable time and money.

Worse yet, today’s counterfeiters are often large criminal syndicates that don’t stop at distributing hundreds of copies of unlicensed software. Software pirates are likely to create botnets, which are armies of compromised computers controlled by cybercriminals and used to perform a host of illegal Internet activities.

Next appear some tips to help you avoid buying counterfeit software:

1. Take the time to fully research the products you are buying and from whom you get them. Read reviews and talk to retailers so you build a knowledgeable perspective.
2. If the price seems too good to be true, it probably is. Buy from a reputable source such as a major retailer or other recognized reseller.
3. Look for spelling mistakes on the software package or a shoddy appearance.
4. Make sure software products are licensed. It is standard that every legal piece of software includes a developer’s license agreement.
5. If you’re unsure if a product is legitimate, call the manufacturer.

Microsoft has launched an education campaign to help you recognize counterfeit and pirated software, and know if you’re purchasing genuine products. For more information, visit their “How to Tell” site at <http://microsoft.com:80/howtotell>.

Microsoft Windows Vista Unleashed,

2nd Edition

Reviewed by Jim Krill, a member of the North Orange County Computer Club, CA, Orange Bytes, June 2009, www.noccc.org, editor@noccc.org

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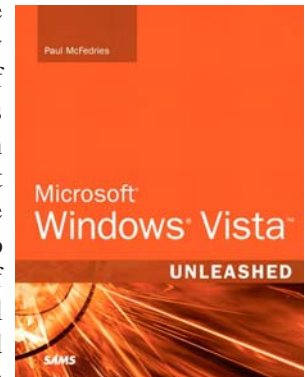
Microsoft Windows Vista is the operating system everyone loves to hate. It's constantly being criticized. This reviewer bought a new Dell Inspiron 1525 in November 2008 and had planned on removing Windows Vista and installing a copy of Windows XP Professional based on the news stories critical of Windows Vista. I decided to give it a month and see what happens. Well, nothing happened. It worked well and continues to work well. I have no plans to remove it and will probably delay purchase of the new version of Windows when it's released later this year. That being said, I needed a good reference manual for Windows Vista. I'm thinking that **Windows Vista Unleashed** is that book.

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

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

Because there are five versions of Windows Vista, it's nice to know which version is being discussed in the book. Windows Vista Unleashed uses a graphic logo to indicate which version of Windows Vista applies to a subject. Since this reviewer uses the Home Basic (Cheap) it's nice to

know that I don't have to waste my time reading up on a utility that isn't in my version of Windows Vista and it also helps to know what IS in any version of Windows Vista. It can get confusing even for the professionals. If no graphic logo appears, then ALL versions of Windows Vista apply. This small help aid was much appreciated by this reviewer. It's the simple ideas that make a big difference.



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

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

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

This reviewer uses a laptop for everything and there is some useful information for laptop users that you don't find in most books. I thought I knew everything I needed to know about power management but I was wrong. I, for one, didn't know you could configure the power buttons.

Very useful. I actually played with the power options as I was reading the book. In the Control Panel, there is one entire section for the Mobile PC

Control Panel. If you have tried to use the tools in Windows Vista, like I have, then here is a book for you.

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

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

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

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

List Price: \$49.⁹⁹. To order from the publisher : <http://www.informit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=067233013x>. ■

Poor Dog

So often we call a man a dog when we want to reproach him.

And yet a dog:

- Doesn't lie
- Doesn't swear
- Doesn't drink
- Doesn't cheat
- Doesn't swindle
- Doesn't smoke
- Doesn't flirt
- Doesn't pretend
- Doesn't borrow



And wouldn't even resent it if you called him a man!

Reprinted from APCUG Reports.

Video To Take With You

Your MP3 player might hold all of your favorite music, but what if you want to watch video or access the Internet, too? Some models can do just that, letting you watch episodes of a TV show while you're stuck at the airport during a long layover. Another option for portable video that is great for travel is a portable DVD player. This will plug into your car's overhead video monitors (if you have them installed) and can also be taken with you into hotel rooms when you stop at night.

Camera Shopping? Consider Battery

Some cameras use proprietary batteries (most commonly Li-Ion battery packs), which tend to last longer between charges than AA batteries. On the other hand, buying replacement batteries is trickier. Although you can find replacement proprietary batteries at your local electronics store, if you're sightseeing at a national park, you may not find a spare battery. Standard AA batteries generally require replacement more often than proprietary batteries, but it's easier to find AA replacements in a pinch.

Troubleshoot A Camera Connection

If you don't see an icon for your digital camera in My Computer, first make sure that the cable for your camera is firmly connected to both the camera and to your PC. Also, double-check that your camera is turned on and, if it has a USB Transfer mode, that you have pressed the right button or turned the mode dial to the proper position.

If you still can't find an icon for your camera in My Computer, remember that some cameras show up as removable drives.

Share And Print Your Photos Online

There are several online sites that will let you share your photos with loved ones who are far away. Social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace will let you upload photos to your profile, but sites such as Flickr, Picasa, Shutterfly, and Snapfish are dedicated solely to your photos. These sites will help you manage your photos so you can share them with anyone you would like, and some of them will even let you order prints and custom products, such as albums, calendars, mugs, and t-shirts, using the photos you've uploaded and the albums you've created.

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Install Those Updates

By Marjie Tucker, Newsletter Editor, Mountain Computer User Group, Georgia, www.mcug.org,
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Are you taking every precaution to safeguard the data on your computer? If you answer "yes" because you have turned on the Windows Firewall and use anti-virus and anti-spyware software, that's great. However, you may be forgetting something very important - installing software updates.

Software usually contains bugs that are not found until the general public uses it. Because of this, all companies including Microsoft and Apple periodically make updates available to fix the bugs that have appeared. Many viruses and worms are written specifically to take advantage of holes that appear in operating systems and other programs. If you don't install the latest updates to your computer, those holes will remain and your data will be vulnerable to the malware.

Both Windows XP and Windows Vista have the ability to automatically download the most important updates as they are posted. To ensure that this is happening on your computer use the Control Panel to go to the Windows Security Center and make certain that the Automatic Updates are turned on. If Automatic Updating shows a green On color, then the updates will be downloaded. If the function for Automatic Updates is disabled, use the setting available to turn it on.

When the updates have been downloaded to your computer you are notified of their presence. This usually occurs with a small golden icon in the lower right-hand corner of your taskbar that reads "Updates are ready for your computer." If you click on the icon and give permission, the update will install immediately, usually in the background so you can continue working. After it is installed you may be asked to give permission for your computer to reboot.

However, if you tell the computer not to install this update, the message that it is available may stay on your computer permanently, as it waits for you to click that it can now be installed. If you see the gold icon on your taskbar, check to see if you have updates waiting right now so you can protect your computer.

There May Be Additional Updates

Sometimes there are optional updates available that won't be downloaded automatically. For that reason it's a good idea to check the Microsoft Update website periodically. The easiest way to check is to use the link you can find on your Start Menu.

That link will take you directly to the Microsoft Update site where you can choose between the Express or Custom method of installing available updates. Custom is preferable so you can determine if there are any updates you don't want to install.

Click on the Custom button and then wait while the Microsoft site compares your computer's software against the Microsoft database. Eventually you will see a list of updates that are missing from your computer. Any High-Priority (important for security) updates will already be selected to be downloaded. However, you need to look at the Optional Updates to choose the ones you want to include. Click on Software, Optional and choose all that are shown. You should need all of these. If any Hardware, Optional updates are shown, you should be a little choosier. If your hardware is working properly, you may want to skip these driver updates. But if you are suffering any hardware problems, these updates may solve your problems.

After you have chosen the updates you want to download, click on Install Updates at the top of the screen and the download will begin. This may take quite a bit of time, depending on the number and size of the updates being downloaded. This would actually be a good time to take a coffee break or make that important telephone call.

You can view a list of the updates you have installed on your computer at the Add or Remove Programs location on your Control Panel. At the top of the screen you will see a small box labeled "Show Updates." Click in that box and all your Microsoft updates will be displayed.

This screen is very useful if you encounter difficulty after installing an update or service pack. You can always find the update and uninstall it through this screen.

You can also easily see if your computer contains the latest Windows Service Packs by looking at the Properties of My Computer. Right-click over the My Computer icon and choose Properties. The most recently installed Service Pack will be listed on this screen.

Don't Forget Your Anti-MalWare Programs

Of course, it's also critical to constantly update your anti-malware programs. Viruses, worms, and spyware are constantly being developed and these protection programs work hard to provide fixes. When possible, also set these programs for automatic updates and regularly perform a manual update just to make certain that you don't miss any patches or new program features.

And, Remember Your Other Software

We've spent most of our time talking about Microsoft software. Your other programs, such as Adobe Reader and Java also receive regular updates. Look at the settings for those to be sure they are updating automatically. This is especially important if you have any difficulty while working with a program. The solution may be as simple as installing the latest patch.

Apple Software Updates

Apple also frequently releases updates that you can download and install. To check your Mac for patches, use the Apple menu and choose Software Updates.

You can also set your Mac to get Automatic Updates by choosing System Preferences from the Apple menu. Choose View and Software Update. One of the choices is Automatic and you can also choose a time for the computer to check the Apple website.



Controlling System Restore

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Did a shareware application you were enamored of turn out to be an unmitigated disaster? Perhaps a device driver installation, system update or modification to a registry key went bad, and your system wandered into an alternate universe. Windows has a utility called System Restore that takes a picture, called a Restore Point, of your system before certain types of operations are started. System Restore is a very handy feature that allows you to go back in time to erase actions you have come to regret. If a problem occurs you can revert back to the way things were, and all is well again.

System Restore, for all its utility and convenience, has its drawbacks. Some argue that if there is not enough free disk space, System Restore will fail to create a restore point, so an unsuspecting person may discover that there is no restore point available when trying to put things back to normal. There is also no way to make a permanent restore point that will not get deleted after a time when automatic restore points need the disk space. This could be a predicament if a problem is intermittent.

It is possible that System Restore may be responsible for your disk drive running out of room. While today's super-sized drives make that less likely than a few years ago running out of disk space could still happen, especially if you load up your system with videos. You can reduce that likelihood even further by configuring System Restore properly.

The snapshots we talked about in the first paragraph are taken by a built-in program called the Volume Snapshot Service (VSS). There is no way to access this utility in the standard Windows Graphical Utility Interface (GUI). This means you can't get to it with a menu option. You need to open a Command Prompt window with elevated administrator privileges.

Click on the Start orb located down at the bottom left corner of your screen, select All Programs, and open the Accessories folder. Right click on the Command Prompt icon, and then select Run as Administrator from the menu. That will open up a Command Prompt window with enough authority to configure System Restore.

Before doing any configuration, let's take some time to understand how System Restore works. You can do this with the

Stay Secure

Remember to set your operating system and programs for Automatic Updates, install those updates, and periodically check the websites manually to ensure that you have all the latest patches. This is an easy and inexpensive way to help protect your data. ■

vssadmin tool. At the Command Prompt type vssadmin /? (Press Enter after typing a command.)

You see a list of all the commands supported by the utility.

(Note: Shadow copy = Restore Point)

Enter the command vssadmin list shadows

This displays a list of all the restore points currently on the system.

The list shadowstorage command displays the amount of disk drive space currently being used to store restore points, how much space is set aside to accommodate restore points, and the maximum permitted size for restore points.

To see what's available on your own system, at the Command Prompt type:

Vssadmin list shadowstorage

Take a few minutes to understand the way the information is displayed. If there is enough free disk space you can store up to 64 restore points before Windows automatically starts deleting old restore points to accommodate new ones.

Making backups is an essential task, but there is no reason why Windows should be allowed to consume every available byte of storage with System Restore points. The default settings allow Windows to run amok but you can reset the maximum value with the `resize shadowstorage` command.

Here is an example:

```
Vssadmin resize shadowstorage /for=c: /on=c: /maxsize = 12GB
```

The `/for=` switch specifies the disk drive where the storage space is to be resized.

The `/on=` switch tells Windows where to save the Restore Point.

The `/maxsize=` switch tells Windows how much space it can use for Restore Points.

If you don't specify a maximum size you are giving Windows permission to do anything it wants. The minimum size is 1GB. I have seen references stating that the minimum size can be as low as 300MB, but I could not verify that information.

After entering the `resize` command the system needs to be restarted to take effect. Configuring System Restore points won't solve every problem you may have with Windows, but it will give you more control of how Windows allocates resources. ■

