

TOGGLE

THE MICROCOMPUTER TURN (ON)

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UPDATE

Free Computer Tips

During the last couple of months our user group has been approached by Sharon Parq Associates with an offer to provide us with free computer tips each month for the benefit of our members. The first four tips are included in this issue. These are fairly simple tips, easily understood and may prove useful to know when you are writing that deathless prose for all posterity.

Word Processing

“Inserting the total number of pages in your document” on Page 2 is one of the Sharon Parq items.

“Mixing Column Formats on a Page” on Page 2 is another Sharon Parq item on text formatting.

In *Convert a PDF File To A Text File* the author, Sr. Dorothy Robinson, describes her success in using this utility in converting a PDF file into an RTF file which she could then edit. If you need something like this, as I do as an editor, then take a look.

In *Understanding Digital Signatures* the authors open with this statement: “Digital signatures are a way to verify that an email message is really from the person who supposedly sent it and that it hasn’t been changed.” This tip focuses on digital signatures for email messages. The purpose of the digital signature is to verify the authenticity of the message. That is to ensure that it is not a spoof or spam.

Spreadsheet Notes & Tips

“Updating Values” on page 4 is another Sharon Parq item, which notes that Excel provides a quick way to update values in a table by a uniform amount. Simply follow these steps given in the article.

“Deleting a Hyperlink” on Page 5 is the final Sharon Parq item in this issue. It points out that just deleting the data does not remove the attribute. You need to take further steps to do that.

Operating System

In *Eliminating Obsolete Windows Device Drivers* Vinny LaBash points out that: When you upgrade or change hardware, Windows doesn’t usually delete the old device drivers. Sometimes these obsolete programs can cause hardware conflicts. Seemingly unrelated quirky behavior on the part of the computer can often be traced to a no longer used device driver. He then goes on to tell you how to handle the situation.

In *Best Windows Shortcuts* Vinny LaBash reviews some of the basic key commands that you can use with the Ctrl key. He then discusses some functions that you can perform with the so-called Windows key in conjunction with other keys. You may already know this, but if not, take a look.

General Interest

In *MotionDSP vReveal: Flawed Video No More* the author discusses a software program that dramatically improves video taken with hand held devices.

In *Ease US Partition Master Home Edition* the author discusses the use of a program to repartition a hard disk.

In *Lock Your PC With a USB Drive* the author Kim Kommando tells you how to "lock" your computer using a USB drive.

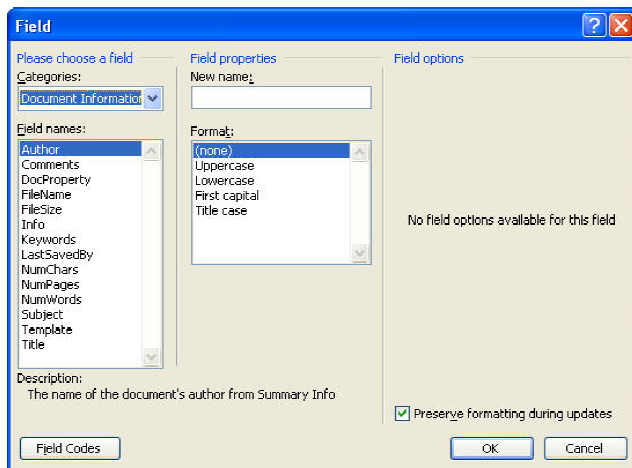
Communications

In *Go Wireless Young Man* the author points out that most new computers come with wireless capability built-in. However, if your computer is older than say, 2005, it may not have this capability. He suggests where you can look to check what is installed in your computer.

WORD PROCESSING NOTES & TIPS

Inserting the Total Number of Pages in Your Document

It is not unusual to put a page number in your headers or footers, if you choose to use headers and footers with your document. You can also, however, insert a field that indicates the total number of pages in a document. This can be used in a header or footer or directly within the text of your document. To insert the total number of pages in your document, follow these steps if you are using a version of Word prior to Word 2007:



The Field Dialog Box

1. Position the insertion point where you want the total number of pages to appear.
2. Choose Field from the Insert menu. You will see the Field dialog box.
3. In the Categories list, choose Document Information.
4. In the Fields Names list, choose NumPages.
5. Click on OK.

The process of inserting a field is a bit different in Word 2007. Follow these steps:

1. Position the insertion point where you want the total number of pages to appear.
2. Make sure the Insert tab of the ribbon is selected.
3. In the Text group, click Quick Parts. You'll see a dropdown menu.
4. Choose Field. Word displays the Field dialog box.
5. In the Categories drop-down list, choose Document Information.
6. In the Field Names list choose NumPages.
7. Click on OK to close the dialog box and insert your field.

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Mixing Column Formats On a Page

It is not uncommon to have a document that mixes different column layouts on a single page. For instance, let's assume you have a five-page document, and you want to format the center part of page two as three columns. You want the rest of the document to remain a single column. To overcome this formatting challenge, you can follow these steps if you are using Word 97 through Word 2003:

1. Select the text that will appear in the columns.
2. Choose the Columns option from the Format menu. Word displays the Columns dialog box.

The Columns dialog box.

3. In the Number of Columns field, specify the number of columns you desire.
4. In the Apply To box, make sure it says Selected Text.
5. Click on OK. Word places the selected text into its own section and sets it in the number of columns you specified.

If you are using Word 2007, then the steps are a bit different:

1. Select the text that will appear in the columns.
2. Choose the Page Layout tab for the ribbon.
3. In the Page Setup group, click the Columns drop-down list.
4. Pick the number of columns you want to use for the selected text.

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Convert a PDF File to a Text File

Sr. Dorothy Robinson, Newsletter Editor,
Olympia Microcomputer User Group, Washington
<http://olymug.org/> [srdorothy\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:srdorothy@gmail.com)

Have you been wishing you had a piece of software that would convert PDF files to text files that you can edit? And maybe also didn't cost an arm and a leg?

BCL Technologies has such software called easyConverter Desktop that costs about \$20. That sounds like a good buy to me. But it only works with Windows (2000, XP, Vista and Win 7). So that leaves a lot of people, namely Linux users, out in the cold.

The good news is that BCL also has a free, online utility that does the same thing. And your operating system doesn't come into it. Open your browser and go to <http://pdfonline.com/pdf2word/index.asp> and take a look.

On the left side, under a header that says **Convert PDF to Word for Free** you'll see a place to browse your computer and

select a file. Note that there is no need to provide your email address, since you'll just download the file directly.

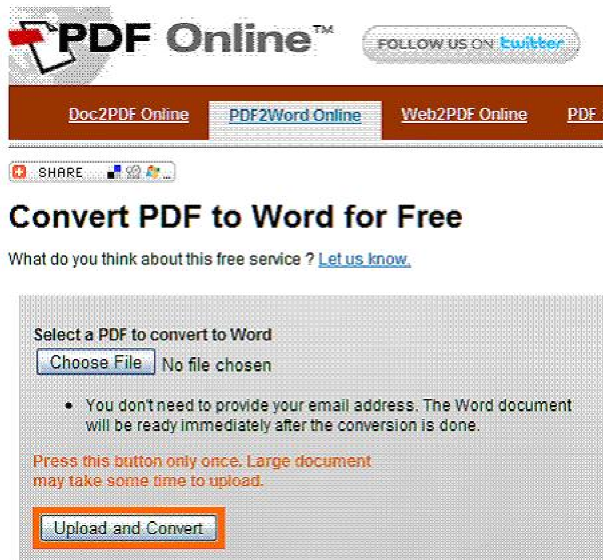
Find your file and double click it (or click once then click Open), then click the Upload and Convert button. Press it only once, and wait; larger files may take a while to upload. The conversion is pretty fast, under a minute for the one or two page files I tried. There is a 2 MB limit on uploads, so really big files won't work.

This part is where, if you wanted to do a lot of files, or large ones, it would be great to have an application on your computer to do it--thus eliminating the time to upload.

The next step is downloading the text file. I'm not sure why the instructions say to Right Click on the link to download the file, because for me at least it didn't work. I Left Clicked instead and the download dialog opened.

You'll see that the file is a rich text file (.RTF or .rtf) which can easily be opened by Word, OpenOffice Writer, Abiword, or other word processors or text editors and be available for editing. When you save it you can save it as a .doc if you like.

The dialog asks, What should (your browser) do with this file? The first choice is to open the file with the default application (mine showed OpenOffice) or you can choose another from a drop-down list.



The second choice is to save the file, and if you choose Save the file, your download manager will save it to the default location--or you might get a Save as dialog and choose where to save it. One caution: opening the file directly rather than downloading it got me a Read Only file, which of course I couldn't edit. So for editing purposes, save the file before opening.

Make your choice by clicking a radio button, then click OK. You now have a text file you can edit. And the quality is very

nice, too for mostly text documents. I tried a PDF file that I had originally created in OpenOffice Writer which contained a calendar in a table. The results were not pretty! And for a postal PDF which was a requisition form using tables, the results were somewhat better but still unusable since the tables overlapped, hiding some of the text.

On the other hand, I made a list of data (several rows and columns) in an OpenOffice spreadsheet, exported it to PDF, then uploaded it and converted it. When I downloaded this file, it was perfect--and perfectly editable.

For me, using Ubuntu Linux, this free, online version is a good thing. Windows users have a choice of the web version or the computer application. And pdf2word gives the best results I've seen for this kind of web application.

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Understanding Digital Signatures

Authors: Mindi McDowell, Allen Householder

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<--Published September 22, 2004-->

Digital signatures are a way to verify that an email message is really from the person who supposedly sent it and that it hasn't been changed.

What is a digital signature?

There are different types of digital signatures; this tip focuses on digital signatures for email messages. You may have received emails that have a block of letters and numbers at the bottom of the message. Although it may look like useless text or some kind of error, this information is actually a digital signature. To generate a signature, a mathematical algorithm is used to combine the information in a key with the information in the message. The result is a random-looking string of letters and numbers.

Why would you use one?

Because it is so easy for attackers and viruses to "spoof" email addresses (see Using Caution with Email Attachments <<http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips/ST04-010.html>> for more information), it is sometimes difficult to identify legitimate messages. Authenticity may be especially important for business correspondence--if you are relying on someone to provide or verify information, you want to be sure that the information is coming from the correct source. A signed message also indicates that changes have not been made to the content since it was sent; any changes would cause the signature to break.

How does it work?

Before you can understand how a digital signature works, there are some terms you should know:

- ◆ Keys - Keys are used to create digital signatures. For every signature, there is a public key and a private key.
- ◆ Private key - The private key is the portion of the key you use to actually sign an email message. The private key is protected by a password, and you should never give your private key to anyone.
- ◆ Public key - The public key is the portion of the key that is available to other people. Whether you upload it to a public key ring or send it to someone, this is the key other people can use to check your signature. A list of other people who have signed your key is also included with your public key. You will only be able to see their identities if you already have their public keys on your key ring.
- ◆ Key ring - A key ring contains public keys. You have a key ring that contains the keys of people who have sent you their keys or whose keys you have gotten from a public key server. A public key server contains keys of people who have chosen to upload their keys.
- ◆ Fingerprint - When confirming a key, you will actually be confirming the unique series of letters and numbers that comprise the fingerprint of the key. The fingerprint is a different series of letters and numbers than the chunk of information that appears at the bottom of a signed email message.
- ◆ Key certificates - When you select a key on a key ring, you will usually see the key certificate, which contains information about the key, such as the key owner, the date the key was created, and the date the key will expire.
- ◆ “Web of trust” - When someone signs your key, they are confirming that the key actually belongs to you. The more signatures you collect, the stronger your key becomes. If someone sees that your key has been signed by other people that he or she trusts, he or she is more inclined to trust your key. **Note:** Just because someone else has trusted a key or you find it on a public key ring does not mean you should automatically trust it. You should always verify the fingerprint yourself.

The process for creating, obtaining, and using keys is fairly straightforward:

- ◆ Generate a key using software such as PGP, which stands for Pretty Good Privacy, or GnuPG, which stands for GNU Privacy Guard.
- ◆ Increase the authenticity of your key by having your key signed by co-workers or other associates who also have

keys. In the process of signing your key, they will confirm that the fingerprint on the key you sent them belongs to you. By doing this, they verify your identity and indicate trust in your key.

- ◆ Upload your signed key to a public key ring so that if someone gets a message with your signature, they can verify the digital signature.
- ◆ Digitally sign your outgoing email messages. Most email clients have a feature to easily add your digital signature to your message.

There are a variety of mechanisms for creating digital signatures, and these mechanisms may operate differently. For example, S/MIME does not add a visible block of letters and numbers within the message, and its digital signatures are verified *indirectly* using a certificate authority instead of *directly* with other users in a web of trust. You may just see an icon or note on the message that the signature has been verified. If you get an error about a digital signature, try to contact the sender through a phone call or a separate email address that you know is valid to verify the authenticity of the message.

SPREADSHEET NOTES & TIPS

Updating Values

Many people use Microsoft Excel to keep track of important information, such as price sheets or cost tables. This data is then used to help calculate proposals or to figure out how much should be charged to customers. It is not uncommon to need to update information in these tables on a periodic basis. For instance, your company may decide that it will increase all prices in the company by ten percent this year.

If you have rather large pricing tables, you may not know the best way to update the prices by the ten percent. Obviously you could make a secondary table and then base the information in that table on a formula, such as $=B3 * 1.1$. This is actually more work than is necessary, however. Excel provides a much quicker way to update values in a table by a uniform amount. Simply follow these steps:

1. Select an empty cell, somewhere outside the range used by your pricing table.
2. Enter the value 1.1 in the empty cell.
3. With the cell selected, press CTRL+C to copy its contents to the Clipboard.
4. Select the entire pricing table. You should not select any headers or non-numeric information in the table.
5. Choose the Paste Special option from the Edit menu. Excel displays the Paste Special dialog box.

6. In the Operation area of the dialog box, make sure you select the Multiply option.
7. Click on OK.
8. Select the cell where you entered the value in step 2.
9. Press the DELETE key.



The Paste Special Dialog Box

If you are using Excel 2007, then the steps are slightly different:

1. Select an empty cell, somewhere outside the range used by your pricing table.
2. Enter the value 1.1 in the empty cell.
3. With the cell selected, press CTRL+C to copy its contents to the Clipboard.
4. Select the entire pricing table. You should not select any headers or non-numeric information in the table.
5. With the Home tab of the ribbon displayed, click the down-arrow at the bottom of the Paste option (left side of the ribbon). Excel displays a drop-down list of pasting options.
6. Choose the Paste Special option from the drop-down list. Excel displays the Paste Special dialog box.
7. In the Operation area of the dialog box, make sure you select the Multiply option.
8. Click on OK.
9. Select the cell where you entered the value in step 2.
10. Press the DELETE key.

That's it! All the values in your pricing table now show a ten percent increase from their previous values.

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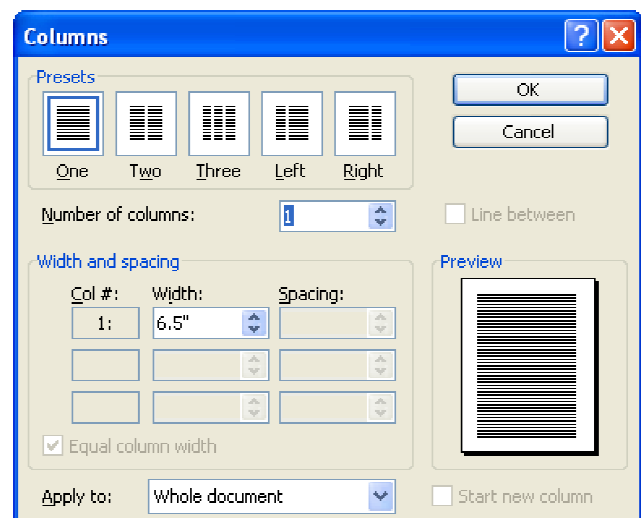
Deleting a Hyperlink

Part of Microsoft Excel's compatibility with the Web is to allow you to define hyperlinks in your workbooks. There may come a time when you no longer need a particular hyperlink. Fortunately, deleting a hyperlink in Excel is very easy to do. All you need to do is follow these steps:

1. Right-click on the hyperlink. Excel displays a Context menu.
2. Choose the Hyperlink option from the Context menu. Excel displays a submenu.
3. Choose Remove Hyperlink from the submenu. Excel dutifully removes the hyperlink.

You should note that in some versions of Excel (such as Excel 2003 and Excel 2007) there is a Remove Hyperlink option directly on the Context menu displayed in step 1. If this is the case, consider yourself fortunate--you can directly remove the hyperlink without the extra steps.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that you can get rid of a hyperlink simply by clearing a cell (moving to the cell and pressing DEL). You can do this in the newer versions of Excel, but you cannot in the older versions. If you do this, the hyperlink text is gone, but the hyperlink itself is still lurking in the background. If you type some information in the cell again, you will notice it is underlined, indicating it is still a hyperlink. The reason for this is because Excel considers the hyperlink to be a format of the cell. Pressing DEL only clears the contents of the cell, *not* its format. You can use other editing techniques to get rid of a hyperlink, however, provided those techniques result in getting rid of formatting or overwriting the formatting.



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OPERATING SYSTEM NOTES & TIPS

Eliminating Obsolete Windows Device Drivers

by Vinny La Bash, <vlabash@comcast.net>
Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

Device drivers are programs that are designed to control (drive) specific types of hardware (devices) that are attached to your computer. These devices can be attached through wires or by wireless connections. No matter how the device is attached you need a program to tell it how to interact with the computer. An operating system such as Windows comes with myriads of device drivers built into it so when you bring your new computer home, attach your printers, external drives, etc., most of them work fine.

The caveat is that drivers are hardware dependent and operating system specific so your external CD-ROM, which worked flawlessly under Vista, may not work with Windows 7 until you install an updated device driver designed for the new OS.

Every operating system directs device drivers to communicate with their devices through the computer bus or a communications subsystem. It is a process which is largely invisible to those trying to get work done on the computer, much like the internal workings of an automobile are largely invisible to a driver trying to get from home to the grocery store.

The invisibility of device drivers is a good thing when everything is working smoothly, but it tends to hinder troubleshooting when trying to track down the cause of a problem. When you upgrade or change hardware, Windows doesn't usually delete the old device drivers. Sometimes these obsolete programs can cause hardware conflicts. Seemingly unrelated quirky behavior on the part of the computer can often be traced to a no longer used device driver.

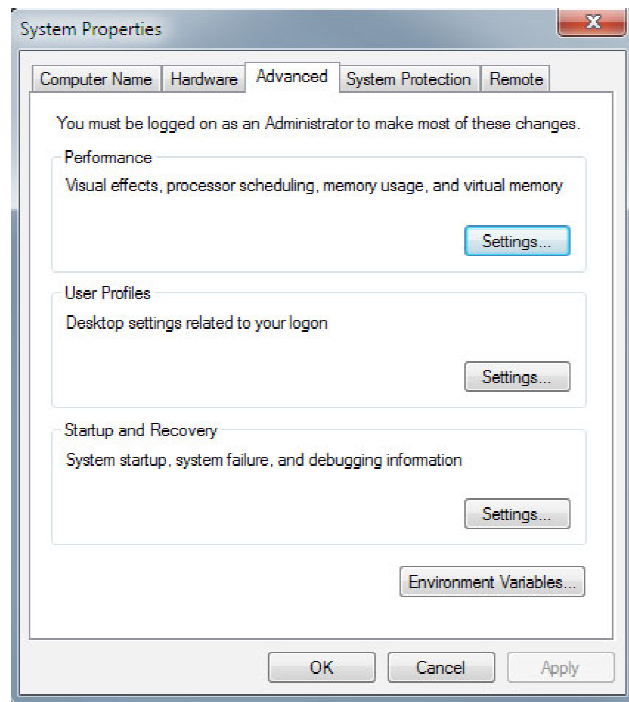
Resolving device driver problems in Windows can be difficult. In this article we're going to focus on finding outdated device drivers and eliminating them from your system.

Manually searching for device drivers on a Windows system can be frustrating, time-consuming, and mostly a waste of effort. Conveniently for us, Microsoft has provided a way to locate unused device drivers and remove them.

The directions herein are designed specifically for Windows 7, but the general process will work for Vista and XP. There are slight variations in the process with each of the operating systems; just be careful when reading each screen. Let's get on with it.

The Device Manager as it comes from Microsoft is not set up to display device drivers that are no longer being used. The Device Manager has to be configured to show obsolete drivers so we can remove them. You need to add something called a special Windows Environment Variable. This is a text string that contains a path, file name or drive. Programmers refer to this as a system property. We don't really care what they call it as long as it works.

1. From the **Start Menu**, right-click on **Computer**.
2. Select **Properties** at the bottom of the list.



3. From the **System** window, select **Advanced system settings**.
4. From the **System Properties** dialog box, select the **Environment Variables** button. (See illustration)
5. The **Environment Variables** dialog box contains two panels, **User variables** and **System variables**.
6. Click the **New** button.
7. In the **New System Variable** dialog box, type **devmgr_show_nonpresent_devices**
8. Type 1 in the **Variable Value** text box.
9. Close all the dialog boxes.

In most cases there is no need to restart the system. Let's test the results of our labor.

1. Access the **Start Menu**.
2. Right click **Computer**.
3. Select **Manage**.
4. When the **Computer Management** window appears, select **Device Manager**.
5. Open the **View** menu and select **Show Hidden Devices**.

From now on whenever you open a branch within the Device Manager tree structure and device icons are "grayed out" or appear faded, these are the unused drivers. You can safely delete them. Whenever you add, remove or change your hardware configuration, always check for left over drivers and avoid problems.

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Best Windows Shortcuts

by Vinny La Bash, <vlabash@comcast.net>
Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

One of the better qualities of a good operating system like Windows is that there is almost always more than one way to do something. There are items you can select from a file menu, use a shortcut or execute some kind of keystroke combination to carry out an action.

There are some things you do almost every time you use your computer. The six following shortcuts all use a similar series of keystrokes. If you don't know about these shortcuts you probably haven't been using computers for very long, and you don't know what you're missing.

It doesn't matter whether you're working with music files, photos, videos, documents, spreadsheets or portions of a document. Simply highlight what you want with your mouse, hold down the Ctrl key, then press and release the indicated key. Don't forget to release the Ctrl key when you're done.

For example, to copy a file, some text or any object: Highlight or select the item with your mouse and then hold the Ctrl button down, press the C key and release. Ctrl+C To paste the copied item or items: Ctrl+V (P was already taken for Print)

Sometimes you want to move an object from one location to another: Ctrl+X

Select everything on a screen or in a folder: Ctrl+A

Print something: Ctrl+P (This is why you can't use this combination to paste).

Oops, I shouldn't have done that: Ctrl+Z (Undoes your mistakes)

Now that we've covered the basics, we can move on to some good stuff. Microsoft introduced something called the Windows key when it announced Windows 95 back in the Stone Age. Also known as the Super key, Windows logo key, the WinKey, the Start key, and sometimes the Flag key, it has been with us ever since. Tapping the Windows key opens or closes the Start menu. If that were all it did there would be nothing else to say. There are several dozen shortcuts that you can easily use with the Windows key in combination with other keys to call up common functions. Here are a few of them:

Win+D: Shows the Desktop

Win+F: Opens the search function

Win+L: Locks the Desktop and lets you switch users

Win+M: Minimizes all open windows

Win+R: Opens the Run box so you can type DOS like commands

Win+P: Very useful with multiple monitors or an external projector

Win+Spacebar: All open windows become transparent so you can see through to the desktop.

There are many others, but these are probably the ones most computer users would invoke most of the time.

Microsoft sometimes does something really terrific, but for whatever reason doesn't tell anyone about it. The company has created an alternate control panel which blows away any tool I've previously seen. Why the company keeps it a secret is beyond me. To create this tool you will need to create a folder, name it, put in a period, and type something called a Globally Unique Identifier (GUID). A GUID is a special type of identifier used in software applications to provide a unique reference number. The value is represented as a 32 character hexadecimal character string. All you need to be concerned with is to type it accurately. Let Microsoft's engineers worry about the details.

- ◆ You can create the folder anywhere, but the most logical place for it is on the Desktop. Make sure you're on the desktop and all windows are closed or minimized.
- ◆ Right-click on an empty area of the desktop and choose New/Folder.
- ◆ Name the folder. It doesn't matter what you call it, the magic is performed by the GUID.
- ◆ After the folder name, type a period.
- ◆ After the period type the GUID {ED7BA470-8E54-465E-825C-99712043E01C} (No spaces are allowed).
- ◆ Press Enter

Open the folder and you have complete control over Windows 7. You might need several hours to count how many things you can do without having to hunt through layers of screens to access an important, but obscure function.

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GENERAL INTEREST

MotionDSP vReveal: Flawed video No More

Software Review by Steve Miller, VP Vendor Relations,
Brookdale Computer User Group, NJ BCUG Bytes, Sept 09
<www.bcug.org> <stevemiller1 (at) comcast.net

“Do you shoot video with your cell phone, digital camera, or other handheld device?” is the question found on the website for vReveal. “Then the chances are good that you have shaky, dark, noisy, pixilated, or blurry videos. Less-than-ideal videos that obscure your life’s best, captured moments.”

“But those moments don’t have to be lost to common video problems anymore,” the site promises. “vReveal has the advanced enhancement technology and “one click” touch-up tools that make it easy to dramatically improve the quality of flawed videos.”

I was impressed by vReveal’s enhancements of my video. I was equally impressed by the dramatic speed increase resulting from off-loading computing from my motherboard CPU to my system video card. As advertised, vReveal improves snowy/jerky/low quality video. It also exports a high quality photo, derived from lower quality source video.

Installation

I own a compatible late-model NVIDIA graphics card (8800GT). I downloaded the latest NVIDIA graphics driver, which enabled vReveal software to use parallel processing by ~100 processors in my video card. During the simple vReveal installation, I specified a video folder to be “watched” by the new program.

Evaluation

My video was displayed split-screen, in order to contrast before and after application of the video enhancements. I discovered an important, but unadvertised use for this amazing software. vReveal improves the quality of Standard Definition (SD) video, so the contrast becomes less noticeable when SD videos are used in the same movie with High Definition (HD) video.

My Standard Definition video sources include traditional SD camcorders as well as my digital still camera (in “video capture” mode). My HD sources include a HD camcorder, and digital photos, which I “pan” and “zoom” to create motion.

I used the following vReveal settings to enhance my Standard Definition video:

- ♦ “One Click Fix” (this automatically “Cleaned”, “Sharpened”, and AutoContrast”).
- ♦ “De-interlace”. (“de-interlace” is an important feature which prevented unacceptable artifacts during video with fast motion).

To view the result of video enhancement, I used my favorite video editor to create one timeline that contained three types of content.

- ♦ Standard definition video, no enhancement
- ♦ Standard Definition video, enhanced with vReveal
- ♦ High Definition video

I then “burned” a standard DVD, and also “burned” a High Definition BluRay DVD (encoded with the optional HDV MPEG2 format). I used Cyberlink “PowerDVD” software with a 24 inch Samsung LCD (1680X1050) to “play” the DVDs, and compare SD video (with and without enhancements) to the HD video.

Visible results

The original (un-enhanced) SD content was clearly deficient to HD video content. After enhancement, my SD content exhibited remarkable video improvement (although not quite up to the high definition sources): Snow (especially resulting from low light) totally disappeared on my SD content after enhancement. Colors were brighter, blacks were blacker, and contrast was enhanced.

vReveal, owned by NVIDIA, includes a performance and control dashboard to showcase the speed increase resulting from leveraging NVIDIA video card GPU (graphics processors). My jobs ran twice as fast when I shifted the processing from my high performance quad core to my lower-end video card!

(Enhancement of my 40 minute SD video took about 90 minutes when off-loaded to the video card, and took about 180 minutes when confined to my high performance quad processor.)

System Requirements

Hardware: Intel or AMD 1.6GHz CPU, 1GB RAM, 50MB hard drive space; NVIDIA video card with “CUDA” enabled (GeForce 8-series, and higher); 100GB free disk per hour of enhanced video (uncompressed AVI)

Software: Microsoft.(R) Windows XP with Service Pack 2 or Windows Vista(TM) Home Premium, Business, Ultimate, or Enterprise (certified for 32-bit editions).

Output file types supported: WMV and uncompressed AVIs

Price: \$49, download from <www.nzone.com> 30-day trial software is available (watermark is applied to output video files.) For more information: <www.vreveal.com/>

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EaseUS Partition Master Home Edition

by Bruce Preston, Danbury Area Computer Society, Inc.

A few weeks ago a friend of mine purchased a used desktop machine that was one of 15 taken from an office. The seller had wiped the machine clean and then re-installed Windows XP from the system restore disk in the restore partition D: partition - 8GB and left the C: partition completely empty - 50GB. It wasn't long before my friend started getting warning messages that he was running out of space on D:. Although he had installed his applications on C:, Windows still puts a lot of stuff such as "Program Files\Common Files" on the 'system' partition, in this case D:

Rather than wipe the drive clean and re-install everything from scratch, we decided to look into resizing the partitions. That's when I found Partition Master Home Edition by EaseUS.com <www.partition-tool.com>. The Home Edition is free for non-commercial use and works with Windows 2000, XP, Vista and 7. There is a Professional Edition (\$39.95) for business use, and there is a server edition that works with the various MS Server products.

Before using it on a 'real' machine with live data, I decided to give it a test run on a throw away hard disk. I created a virtual hard disk on a virtual machine and set the two partitions to about 75%/25% of the virtual drive's space. I then put some files in each partition. I ran Partition Master and was surprised at how easy it was. Because the virtual hard disk didn't have any open operating system files on it, it did the whole realignment without requiring restart.

Confident that it worked I then addressed my friend's machine. Operation is straightforward. When you start it, it presents you with a list of physical drives. My friend's machine had only one physical drive, so that was an easy choice. You get a graphic bar that displays the current partition sizes. A small vertical line within the bar shows how much space is in use within each partition. If you are resizing you clearly can't make the partition smaller than the space already in use by files.

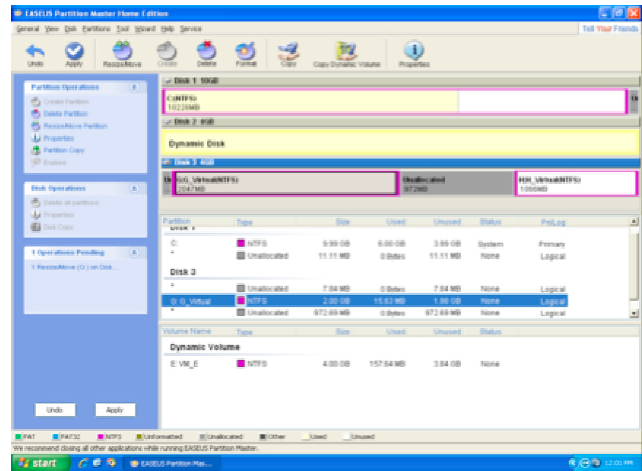
I put the mouse pointer over the heavy vertical bar that separates the two partitions and the pointer changed to a horizontal double-headed arrow suggesting that I could drag it. I dragged the bar to the left, and it indicated that the C: partition would be shrunk to about 28GB. The area between the C: and D: partitions was now graphically displayed as a gray 'unallocated' area.

I put the mouse pointer over the center of the D: partition and was presented with a four-headed arrow pointer, inviting me to drag the partition. I slid it to the left until it adjoined the C: partition. I now had the unallocated area to the right of the D: partition.

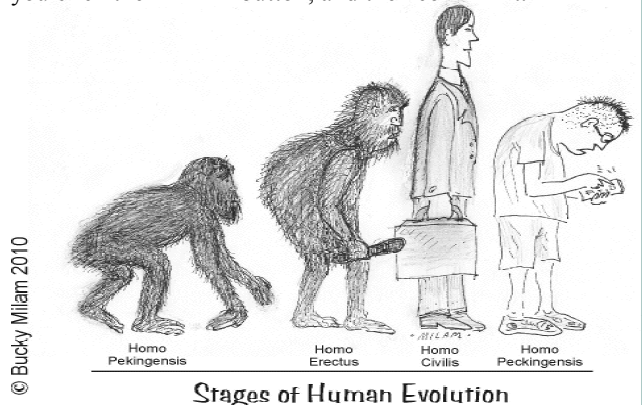
Lastly, I put the mouse pointer over the right end of the D: partition and got the double-headed pointer again. I slid the end of the D: partition all the way to the right, and it indicated that the D: partition would now be expanded to absorb the unallocated space.

At this point the display indicated that the partitions were ready to be resized and both of about 28GB. I clicked APPLY and it indicated that three tasks were queued for operation and asked for a confirmation. Because it was going to perform an operation on the partition containing the operating system, it indicated that it would require a system restart. I approved and off it went.

About 5 minutes or so later the machine booted to my friend's desktop. We checked the drive sizes in My Computer/Properties, and sure enough the drives had been resized. It was a very nice and easy process indeed.



The image shows the screen when I was working with the test configuration on the virtual machine. The test drive is "Disk 3" and displays that I have already requested the resizing (reduction) of "G:" to roughly half of the partition, but have not yet moved and expanded drive "H:". The gray space between them represents the space surrendered from G:. The blue area on the left of the screen shows that I have one operation in the queue. My next operation will be to move H: to the left, followed by extending the size of H: When done you click the APPLY button, and then confirm it.



Lock your PC with a USB drive

by Kim Komando

You can't always be in front of your computer. But stepping away doesn't mean leaving the computer vulnerable. There are easy ways to keep people out of your personal business.

For instance, Windows will lock your computer when you get up. Just click WinKey + L. This preserves your session and brings up the log-in screen. To get back in, you have to enter your password. That works. But there is a better way.

Predator makes locking and unlocking your PC a breeze. You do it with a USB drive. During installation, you designate a drive to serve as your key. Insert it while working. Take it with you when you step away. Pulling it out locks the computer.

Plug it back in to log in. Normally, no password is needed. If you misplace the drive, enter your password to get back in. An alarm will sound if someone enters an incorrect password three times. And it will log any attempts to access the PC while you're away. You'll know if and when someone was trying to snoop.

Cost: FreeB

Link: <www.montpellier-informatique.com/predator/en/index.php?n=Main.HomePage>

System: Windows XP, Vista and 7

COMMUNICATIONS NOTES & TIPS

Go Wireless Young Man

by Jason Mills, Durham Personal Computer User's Club
Newsletter
Durham, Ontario

Since you bought your laptop computer you've probably heard more about "going Wireless" because of convenience. After all that's why you have a laptop computer, to be mobile. Built-in wireless capabilities are becoming almost standard equipment on most laptop and personal computers these days for a couple of reasons. One of the primary reasons is cost. Adding wireless capacity is so inexpensive that it would be silly for the manufacturer not to add it. The perceived value of any machine with wireless far exceeds the cost to add it. Wireless is the wave of the future, so if the manufacturers want to stay ahead of the technology curve they need to add it to all but their most basic models.

If that's the case with you or if I've simply peaked your imagination then read a bit more because I've outlined a few things you can do to check if your computer has wireless capabilities. If you have an older laptop you may still be ready

to go wireless by purchasing an adapter from your local computer retailer.

Laptops - Intel Centrino Mobile Technology

Computer manufacturers do less than a perfect job at explaining what this means but if your laptop came with this built in then that's good news for you! In a nutshell, it means that your laptop has wireless networking built right in and you don't have to do a thing. Intel Centrino Mobile Technology is a marketing name for a combination of the Intel Pentium M processor and Intel's Pro Wireless card.

If you have Intel Mobile Technology then your computer should have a "Centrino" sticker on it somewhere. If you can't find a sticker but you suspect you had one at one time then simply do the following. Right click on your "My Computer" icon. It's probably on your desktop but if not then go to your Start Menu, find My Computer, right click and select Properties. When the menu opens look at what it says after or under the word Computer.

On a side note, Intel Centrino Mobile Technology also increases battery life and allows manufacturers to build computers smaller. If you can't find anything referring to Intel Centrino Mobile Technology under the word Computer--don't worry because as long as your laptop has a free card slot, installing wireless is a piece of cake.

Desktop Computers


If you're not sure whether or not your desktop computer has a wireless connection, the easiest thing to do is to simply turn it around and look for a small aerial sticking out of the back towards the bottom of the CPU case. If it's there then you are wireless enabled. On the other hand, if there's nothing then it's still possible that you have a wireless device in your computer, especially if you purchased it anytime in 2005 or beyond. However, because it's not the best idea (unless you've done it before) to try and open up your computer to check something I'll show you a way to check if you're wireless enabled, using Windows.

Using Windows to Check Wireless Capacity

Rather than messing with your computer's hardware to verify what you've got installed, you can just as easily check using your Windows Device Manager. To use it, right click My Computer, choose Manage and then click Device Manager.

After you click Device Manager a list of everything you can install will appear on the right half of the screen.

Help Lines

SOFTWARE HELP	Advisor No.	HARDWARE HELP	Advisor No.	
Win 95/98/ME	2, 3, 4, 7	Reformat Hard Disk, FDISK	2, 4, 5	
Win 2K/NT/XP	2, 3, 7	Install Hard Drive, CD-ROM/RW	2, 4, 5	
MS Word	2, 7	Install Video Card		
MS Excel	4	Deleting Files, Wiping	6	
MS PowerPoint		Internet/Intranet	6, 7	
WordPerfect	1, 7	Audio Cards	4	
QuickBooks	8	MP3 Files, WMA Files, WAV Files	4	
Norton/Symantec AntiVirus	2, 3, 6, 7	Burning CD's	3, 5	
Norton System Works	2, 7	Partitioning Hard Drives	2	
CompuPic/CompuPic Pro	3, 7	Net Objects	7	
Winzip, WinRAR	6	Homesite	7	
JV Registry Cleaner	3	MS Access		
Outlook, Outlook Express	2			
Internet Explorer	2, 7			
Netscape Navigator	7			
Instant Messaging	2			
Installing Software after Reformatting	5			
Ccleaner	3			
Easy CD DA Extractor	3			
ADVISORS	PHONE		HOURS	
Fred Shelton [1]	(253) 752-0120		Variable	
Bob Henkel [2]	(253) 537-6732		8A-8P anyday	
Tom Stepanek [3]	(253) 922-7939	7-9P Mon-Fri		
Carl Tenning [4]	(206) 824-3843	6-9P Mon-Fri		
Oclad Wesley [5]	(253) 503-7833	6-9P		
Bob Thomson [6]	(253) 752-5582			
Ray Mills [7]	(360) 692-7568	6-9P Mon-Sat		
Sandee Gimblett [8]	(253) 952-3538			

Tacoma Open Group for Microcomputers (TOG)

New Member Application/Existing Member Change of Address Form

For **Tacoma Open Group** annual membership, send form (if needed) & **\$25** to Bob Henkel., 10613 25th Avenue E., Tacoma, WA 98445.

Make checks payable to TOG

Please print or type. Date: _____ Sponsored by: _____

Member's Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____ Plus Four _____ Country: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____ Work phone: (____) _____ E-Mail Address _____

TACOMA MEETING

When: **Mon 10 May 2010 -7:00 PM**
Where: SE Tacoma Community Centre
1614 99th Street E.
Tacoma, Washington

From I-5 take Exit 127 (Hwy 512) to
Portland Ave., north on Portland to 99th,
left over tracks. Building is on south side.

Future Dates: 2nd Monday of Month

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rjthomson@comcast.net
Kitsap County Rep Ray Mills (360) 692-7568
e-mail: r.mills@rm-a.com
web page: <http://www.rm-a.com>

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Deadline: 15th of this month to appear
in next months' issue, if room

Corporate Sponsors:

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www.rm-a.com

How To get To The Meeting

For those readers still unfamiliar with how to find our meeting place we have reproduced the map showing its relationship in Tacoma to Portland Ave S. and the 512 Freeway. The 512 Freeway can be entered from I-5 in Tacoma on the west or from Hwy 167 in Puyallup on the east. Proceed to Portland off-ramp and turn north to 99th Street. Some folks in the middle of Tacoma may prefer to take Portland southbound to 99th. At 99th turn west over the tracks and there you are!



Tacoma OPEN Group for Micros
1808 Lenore Drive
Tacoma, WA 98406-1920

Change Service Requested

PROGRAMS

This Month's Meeting

This will be a regular monthly meeting. Meeting discussions are always interesting and the ever-popular Q&A (Question & Answer) period is sure to pique your interest, come up to your expectations and tickle your fancy. Come and share your own experiences, problems and discoveries.

No specific program presentation has been identified at press time but lively discussions of computer-related topics are sure to come up with interesting and informative dialogue. Be sure to come to the meeting and participate.