

TOGGLE

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UPDATE

Word Processing

In *7 Little Word Annoyances and their Easy Fixes* the author enumerates the seven annoyances and gives at least one thing you can do to correct the problem. If you use WORD this could be just what you are looking for.

Communciations

In *Security Alert - Links in EMail* Carl Tenning alerts us to scams out there on the Internet.

In *Unwanted Processes* Carl Tenning menyions that the three finger salute, Ctrl-Alt-Del will show you what processes are running. Unfamiliar tasks may or may not be malware. He gives us one site address to check on good vs bad. Check it out.

In *Finicky Flash* the author satys: "Flash is a special sort of movie player program that runs inside your browser." He notes that while some features are very useful some are annoying and even undesirbale. You should tread this article if you use the Internet alot - and who doesn't?

In *Tips for Ensuring Your Privacy on the Internet* the author suggests limiting some of your exposure. It always amazes your editor how many people reveal their inner secrets on public forums like FaceBook. Read the article and learn to use some caution.

In *Drop it in the Box: Dropbox, what it is. how it works* the author states: "Dropbox is a free download that offers protection and convenience and is easy to use." It is an easy way to keep files, photos, etc, available to all of your several computers so long as they are "registered" with DropBox. Check it out.

Operating System

In *Cloud Computing* the author notes that although you have heard of Cloud Computing before and even use it to some extent there are pitfalls and

things you should be aware of when you use "the Cloud." Read! Learn!

In *Haven't Upgraded to Windows 7 Yet?* the authors give a very brief pre-view of what the new operating system will be like.

In *Something's Missing* the author states that her computer acts in a way strange to her. A couple of group members try to suggest a solution.

General Interest

In *GANKED by a nOOB* Vinnie LaBash admits that he has become a gamer! I can hardly believe it, but he claims that it is alot of fun. Maybe it is. You might want to check it out after reading his article.

In *Useful Utilities - Bulk Rename* the author notes that phot files as an example, are often given meaningless names automatically. This utility will allow you to rename files more meaningfully.

In *Synchronize Your Bookmarks Between Computers* Kim Komando suggests that if you are using more then one computer or computing device you may want to read this article.

Hardware

In *Questions on USB Devices* the author summarizes questions and answers which came up at a monthly meeting of the Danbury Club among those members attending.

WORD PROCESSING NOTES & TIPS

7 LITTLE WORD ANNOYANCES And their Easy Fixes

by Nancy DeMarte ndemarte (at) Verizon.net
Sarasota PCUG, Inc. www.spcug.org

Below is a collection of frustrating things that can happen when using Microsoft Word. These annoyances can occur in any version of Word although most are geared to Word 2007 and 2010. In Word 2003, the fix-it steps may be different.

Annoyance 1 -- You accidentally press the Caps Lock key on your keyboard before typing a paragraph. When you finish, you find everything in capital letters.

The Fix: Rather than retyping the whole paragraph, highlight the text, then click the “Change Case” button (Aa), located on the Home tab in the Font group. Click “Sentence case” to transform your paragraph into normal sentences.

Annoyance 2 -- You create a party invitation with a light blue background (Page Layout tab - Page Color). But when you print it, the background is white.

The Fix: Office has set Word to not print full page background colors, probably to save users from wasting ink. You can, however, make the colored background print. Click the Office button, then Word Options -- Display. Put a check mark next to “Print background colors and images,” then click OK. Until you remove this checkmark, all colored backgrounds will print.

Annoyance 3 -- You’re working on a document where you’ve set the text size to be a fairly small 10 points. But you find that the text is too small to view comfortably while you’re typing.

The Fix: Drag the Zoom slider located in the bottom right corner of the Word window to the right to enlarge the screen view of the text. When printed, the text will be 10 points no matter how big it appears on the screen.

Annoyance 4 -- You find that the spaces between lines of text in your document are wider than you want.

The Fix: If all the spaces are wider than expected, you can change the line spacing for the whole document at once. On the Home tab, in the Editing group, click Select All to highlight all the text. Next click the Line Spacing button in the Paragraph group and select 1.0 for single-spacing or one of the other choices.

Note: Word will not remove extra space after paragraphs when you choose a line spacing size. To remove extra space after a paragraph, select the paragraph before the extra space, click the Line Spacing button and choose “Remove Space After Paragraph.” A more permanent way to create no extra space between paragraphs is to open the Paragraph group dialog box launcher (small diagonal arrow) on the Home tab and put a checkmark in front of “Don’t add space between paragraphs of the same style.”

Annoyance 5 -- Every time you type an email or web address into a document, it turns into a clickable hyperlink with underlined blue text, even if that isn’t your intention.

The Fix: The quickest fix is to right click the address and select

“Remove Hyperlink.” But this is only a one time remedy. To remove this action permanently, click the Windows button, then this sequence: Word Options --Proofing --Auto- Correct Options --AutoFormat As You Type. Remove the checkmark next to “Internet and Network paths with hyperlinks” and click OK.

Annoyance 6 -- You find that as you type, distracting wavy red and green lines show up under words and phrases.

The Fix: Word is set to check spelling (red lines) and grammar (green lines) as you type. This is another Proofing option which comes enabled from the factory. To turn off one or both of these features, go to Word Options (Office button - Word Options) and click Proofing. Remove the checkmarks next to “Mark grammar errors as you type” and “Check spelling as you type.” You can always check spelling and grammar after your document is complete by clicking Spelling & Grammar at the left end of the Review tab.

Several of these fixes involve the settings found in the Options area of the Office 2007 menu (File menu in 2010). Options are available for all the Office programs (Word Options, Excel Options, Access Options, etc.) These default settings were determined by interviews with thousands of people who use Office regularly in the workplace. If you find that the factory settings are causing you more trouble than help, changing them is a simple task. All Office users should take a personal tour of the Options menus, which resemble this Word Options window with the Auto-Correct box open:

Annoyance 7 -- You often save documents to the same folder which is buried within other folders in My Documents. It takes several clicks to find this folder each time you want to open or save a document to it.

Fix 1: You can find almost any folder on your Windows Vista or 7 computer by typing its name into the Start Menu search box just above the Start button. Often it takes only a letter or two before the folder appears in the search results. On the downside, you have to do this each time you want to open the folder.

Fix 2: A way to make any folder immediately available is to add it to the Favorites section of the navigation pane. This pane appears on the left side of any explorer window where you are viewing, opening or saving files and folders. To make a folder a Favorite, start by creating or opening a file, like a document, and click Save As, which opens the Save As dialog box. This reveals the navigation pane on the left, showing a list of possible places to save the file. Navigate to the folder you want to make a favorite so that it is the last item in the history bar across the top. Then right click the word Favorites in the left pane, From the drop down menu, click “Add current location to Favorites.” Your special folder will now appear in the Favorites list. It will also appear in the Favorites list of the other MS Office programs on your computer, such as Excel and PowerPoint. To remove a folder from Favorites, right click the folder and select Remove.

Using a computer should be fun as well as useful. Take a few minutes to think what your personal computer annoyances are and try to find fixes for them. Customizing your programs makes using the computer much more enjoyable and efficient.

COMMUNICATIONS NOTES & TIPS

Security Alert -- Links in Emails

by Carl Tenning,

Tacoma Open Group for Microcomputers

Links in e-mails can be security risk. If you get an email from your bank or credit card provider and it asks you to click on a link (even a secure one), [there is] good chance it is bogus and will link you to a malware site. Even friends who have forwarded you email may, unknowingly, be forwarding an email with bogus links. The victim may even be unaware that the link has downloaded a Trojan that transmits data from your computer to thieves without the computer owner ever knowing it.

One sure sign of a bogus bank web site is the “server overloaded, try again later” message.

Unwanted Processes

by Carl Tenning, Tacoma Open Group For Microcomputers

To find out what processes are running on your computer, press the Ctrl, Alt, and Delete keys together. It brings up the Windows Task Manager that displays the tasks running on your computer. If you should see any unfamiliar tasks running, they may be malware, running in the background. Although all unfamiliar tasks may not be malware, one way to check is to look them up in a Process Library. One such library is PC PitStop at <http://pcpitstop.com/libraries/process/>

It categorizes the processes as either Safe, User Optional, Unwanted, Spyware / Adware, Virus, or Unknown. If you find something that you don't recognize, you can check it against this list. From Windows Task Manager, you can safely highlight an item and click on “End Task”. In fact, if a malware should pop-up on your computer, you should end the task in this manner rather than clicking anywhere on the pop-up window, even the “X” in the upper right-hand corner.

Finicky Flash

Rick Curry, Channel Islands PCUG, California (<http://www.cipcug.org/>)

Flash is a special sort of movie player program that runs inside your browser. It usually opens a rectangular window inside the browser. Often a video advertisement, a movie clip, television clip, or a flashing repetitive cadence of words will be in this rectangle. It can also be complex enough to play a video game.

Toby (CIPCUG tech guru) has shown us how to block Flash using the NoScript add-on to the Firefox browser because Flash can be a source of continuous nuisance in the form of distracting images and sounds as well as being powerful enough to serve as a way for malicious programs to get inside

your computer.

Alas, with all of its faults, many useful websites will not run without Flash. There will almost certainly be times when you find yourself telling NoScript that it is OK at a particular website (like your bank). So we want to have Flash installed.

Much like Windows or other programs, Flash gets updated to fix problems and introduce new features. Fortunately, Flash is configured to automatically tell you when it needs to be updated. Unfortunately, the netherworld of Internet-based thieves has come up with ways to pop up a window that looks just like Flash telling you to update. So if a window pops up and tells you to update Flash, treat it like a phishing scam where someone is pretending to be your bank and is sending you a false link. Do not do what it says to do. Close that window and ignore the instructions just the way you would ignore the email message that says:

HI! WE ARE YOUR BANK!

>>click here and see what happens <<

We must not click on links to get our Flash updates. Type in the addresses by hand to check for new versions of Flash, for now. It is a nuisance, but it is the best way to be safe for the time being.

Close all of your open browsers and any pop-up windows, like the one telling you to update Flash. I check with Task Manager at this point to make sure that all of the browsers have been closed, but that step is very rarely necessary and somewhat dangerous if you do not know what you are doing.

Next open a new copy of your browser and see if you actually need any updates from the official Flash website by typing in this address: <http://www.adobe.com/software/flash/about>. If you use NoScript, make sure you allow JavaScript on this page! Your current Flash version will be displayed under the big rectangular picture. It is on the right under the heading “Version Information.” Further down the page is a table listing the latest versions of Flash. If you are already running the latest version, you are done. If you want to get the latest version of Flash, you can get it here: <http://www.adobe.com/support/flashplayer/downloads.html>.

My children just told me that they are having Flash programs hang (stop and never resume) while displaying: “loading.” They also told me that clearing the browser cache, closing all browsers, and then starting over seems to always be the fix. These strange problems reported in Flash are reason enough that most of us should check for updates to Flash.

While writing this article, I started checking. The first two computers at my house needed to be updated, and I never saw any update notice for either machine. Just make sure to go to the real website for your Flash updates.

If you update Flash and the update notice keeps coming back every time you start your browser, you may have picked up a virus or Trojan horse. If you think this has happened, it is time to seek help from a professional.

Tips for Ensuring Your Privacy on the Internet

by Dick Maybach, n2nd@charter.net

When posting information to the Internet, keep three things in mind:

1. you can't restrict where it will go;
2. you can't restrict who will see it; and
3. it will stay there forever.

If you want to keep something private, don't post it.

In the old (pre-Internet) days, if something you told a friend in confidence became public, it was his word against yours. It's much harder to deny a picture of you or an e-mail with your return address. Information about you is most commonly posted on your personal Web site, on social networks, such as Facebook, and on photo sharing sites, such as Flickr. Very few people would post their social security numbers or bank passwords, but you must also be careful with other data.

Be careful about disclosing information that could be used by an identity thief; this includes your birthday, address, and phone number. Although much of this is readily available, you don't want to make a thief's job easy. Your strategy here is like that of locking your car and house; it's not difficult to break into these, but if your neighbor doesn't lock up, he provides an easier, more attractive target.

Keep personal data private

Don't forget that many banks make available hint questions to "help" you if you forget your password, so you should not disseminate personal data used in the hint questions, such as your mother's maiden name, your high school, your pet names, etc. You should avoid taking the quizzes offered by some social websites, as they often ask the same questions about your personal life that are used in password hints.

Don't advertise when you will be away, even for a short time. The time to talk about your cruise or a concert is after you return home. You wouldn't put a note on your door saying that you will out for several hours or days, and you certainly don't want to do this on the Internet, where the information is available to many more people.

Protect you children. Don't disclose their names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, or where they attend school, especially if you show their pictures. Small children should not have a computer in their bedroom; instead it should be in a public area of the house where you can check on their on-line activities.

If your children have a social Web site, insist that you be a "friend" and check it often. This has to be done carefully, especially with teens, lest you appear to be meddling. However, since they already think you are a fossil, you probably won't damage your reputation much.

Although it isn't a privacy issue, don't publicly criticize your company or boss. While we would like to think that our employers are tolerant, some aren't, and an intemperate outburst could damage your career. This is especially true if your remarks could be interpreted as racial, religious, or sexual bias, as these could expose you to legal prosecution. Indeed, you will most likely regret any public tirade. At the least, it will make your friends think less of you. This also applies to e-mail. If you are really teamed, don't mail it immediately but let it sit as a draft for a day; then read it carefully after you have calmed down.

Don't disclose risky behavior

Don't disclose any risky behavior in which you indulge. If you like to smoke, drink, rock climb, race cars, explore caves, or hang glide, your insurance company could decide they won't pay a future claim, because you failed to disclose the extra risks associated with such activities. As far as I know, they aren't yet doing this yet, but why take the chance they might begin, say 20 years from now.

Be very careful about posting pictures of you or your friends in compromising situations. Young people are especially likely to be trapped by this. In the recent election campaign, some candidates had to live down pictures taken at parties when they were in their teens and twenties. This is a difficult problem, since cell phone cameras are now ubiquitous and such pictures are often published by "friends." You can contact the Web site and demand that the offending material be removed, but a better strategy is to be careful in public. Even though you never publish anything, information about you is splattered all over the Internet. For example, a search for "Dick Maybach" produces almost 600 hits, and because my name is unusual, most of them are about me. If you have a common name, you can to some extent hide in the haystack; for example, "John Doe" produces almost 3,000,000 hits. However, even with a common name, adding a few details, such as your city (for example "John Doe" and "Middletown NJ"), will greatly improve the relevance of the results. If you find something to which you really object, you can contact the site and ask that it be removed, but success here is doubtful.

Finally, use the maximum privacy settings that your social networking site provides. In particular, limit access to your page to designated friends. Remember, that these sites make their money by disclosing your information to others. While it may be more convenient to use such sites than to send e-mails to friends, it adds substantial risk.

Drop it in the Box: Dropbox, what it is, how it works

by Jo Grazide gio520 [at] gmail.com

From the February 2011 issue of Bug Bytes, newsletter of the Barookdale Computer User Group, New Jersey

What is Dropbox?

Suppose you were able to save work without using a flash drive, a disk (CD or DVD-R or RW), or an external drive, or even email, and move files between your laptop and desktop? For many years, I, like so many of us, had developed methods and procedures to upload, download, and save documents, music and pictures to a storage device, only to have to rely on memory to locate it afterwards. Another irritating problem for me, especially when I was working, was to identify the “latest” version, so that an older file would not overwrite my work during a “Save As.”

Enter Dropbox, a useful application that eliminates lots of work and uncertainty.

Dropbox is a free download that offers protection and convenience and is easy to use. There is basically no learning involved. You should, however, be familiar with Drag & Drop and Move vs. Copy. Why not give Dropbox a try and see whether this is for you.

I first heard of Dropbox during a meeting of my camera club. Some members seemed happy with it; there were no negative comments, leading me to investigate. Having a way to store photography files without worrying about loss or corruption seemed an ideal solution to the problem of travel pictures. I got to test this, when I maxed out the Dropbox folder at around 2 GB during a vacation in Boston. There are two ways to increase your storage capacity - you can purchase the program on a monthly or yearly basis, or you can have friends join the service and be rewarded a few more MB's up to a whopping 8GB.

Get the App

To acquire Dropbox, you need to go to the web site at www.dropbox.com. The download is quick and easy. Just run it, and follow the instructions. There are six initial steps:

1. Take the tour;
2. Install Dropbox;
3. Put files in your Dropbox folder;
4. Install Dropbox on other computers;
5. Share a folder with friends or colleagues;
6. Invite friends to join.

It is necessary to install the program on all computers that you will be using. The setup is done on the website, and the instructions are easy. In my case, this is my laptop and my desktop. As I move around with the laptop, to meetings or anywhere I use it, I'm able to save files as they are created, directly into the Dropbox folder, which sits in the system tray

area. By clicking on its icon, Dropbox will provide easy and helpful commands.

In addition, I know that once I reach home, altered files will be available and updated on my desktop machine. They can be dragged into their proper locations on the storage drives. This has been extremely useful. Instead of dealing with two documents, a newer version and an older version, there is only one synchronized version. Another nice aspect is that I don't have to worry about misplacing storage disks or flash drives, which does happen. I also would think that it lessens stress, as there is nothing to lose!

On the Website

There is plenty of information on the Dropbox website. There are videos and explanations of the synching process. Basically, anything that is put into the local folder is also recorded on the Internet. You can also access your files and upload them directly onto the Dropbox server. It can be compared to using GoogleDocs or Windows Live Mesh. Collaboration, by the way, is possible. I haven't delved into this, because I simply need a way to move data between computers. If you want to learn more, you need to visit the Dropbox website and study this feature.

The Dropbox website has five tabs:

- “Get Started” walks you through several chores before you can earn some extra space. This is simple and easy to understand.
- “Files” is the online list of your current Dropbox inhabitants, their sizes and the dates they were modified. You can sort each column by clicking on its heading. There are buttons here that let you do even more. A basic knowledge of file management is all you need to comprehend this part of the application.
- “Events” is a listing of various edits, deletions, and other information about your files.
- “Sharing” allows you to create a new folder to share, or share an existing folder. By following the prompts, you can identify who you want to share the folder with. In my case, I began typing my husband's email address, and it was prefilled for me. This would make it easier for multiple shares in a business or committee setting. Perhaps our next Board meeting minutes will appear in a Dropbox folder! I also found that once the shared folder appeared in my local Dropbox folder, I could rename it and manage it locally. A refresh caused the change to appear on the website immediately. I like this type of efficiency. There is no lag time, and information can be relayed quickly between computers.
- Finally, “Help” is all the rest. It seems that the Dropbox website is complete; you can spend much time learning

about it. I would suggest that you jump in and try out the program; you can learn by doing as well.

There are a couple of things I would warn you about as a new user. If you simply drag and drop the file back and forth, it copies the file. You may want to rightdrag and choose move to ensure you have the latest version of your work or photograph. Also, having a comfort level with storage online to some extent, and not adding things like your Social Security number or banking information, goes without saying. Aside from that, there are no problems I can see with using this reliably.

One Last Thing

I do have one favor to ask you if you do join Dropbox; please use the link! It will enable both of us to get some extra space, a great reward and well deserved! The link to join on my behalf is <http://db.tt/sHvgWOp> I promise I will not waste the space!!!!

System Requirements

Hardware: At least 512MB of RAM; free space on your computer equal to your Dropbox storage quota.

Software:

- Windows: Windows 2003, Windows XP, Windows Vista, and Windows 7 (32 and 64-bit).
- Mac OS x: Tiger (10.4) or later.
- Linux: Ubuntu 7.10+ and Fedora Core 9+ .
- Also iPhone iOS 3.1, Android 1.5 and Blackberry 4.5.

Pricing: Up to 2 gigabytes of free storage space;

DropBox 50, up to 50GB storage for \$9.99/month or \$99/year;
Dropbox 100, up to 100GB storage for 19.95/ month or \$199/year.

For more information:

<https://www.dropbox.com/plansproducts/desktop>

OPERATING SYSTEM NOTES & TIPS

CLOUD COMPUTING

by Dick Maybach n2nd (at) charter.net

Although you can hardly pick up a computer publication without being assaulted by references to cloud computing, the term has been abducted by marketing organizations to the extent that it means almost nothing. Today, “cloud” is to computing as “natural” is to food. Although the term means little, the concept is very valuable, and is something that most computer owners use every day.

I define cloud computing as using storage or processing resources on the Internet. Most of us already use cloud computing far more than we realize; for example, every e-mail

we receive sits on our ISP’s disk until we download it to our PCs, and when we use Google Maps, much the processing and all of the storage occurs on Google’s hardware. In the extreme, cloud computing could evolve to the point where our computer would consist of only a keyboard, mouse, display, and perhaps a printer, with just enough processing power and software to support a Web browser. Google foresaw this as the future of home computing and began developing their Chrome operating system to support it.

A simple example of cloud computing is a backup service, which continually backs up all your data whenever you are connected to the Internet. You don’t have to think about it, and because your backups are stored at a different location, they are safe even in case of a local catastrophe. A similar use is synchronizing data among several computers, where the data might be files, contacts, and your favorite Web sites and (with care) their passwords. Many people also use the cloud to share information with others, for example by using Facebook for personal information, Flickr for photos, or Google Docs for documents. Cloud storage is both convenient and inexpensive; indeed, many vendors offer up to two gigabytes free.

All the above examples are data storage ones, but there are also cloud processing services, such as Google Docs. Google Docs supports the common office tasks such as word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations, which means you can perform these without purchasing an office suite and having to keep it updated. It also allows on-line collaboration (where, for example, several people edit the same document) although few home users are likely to need this feature. Like cloud storage, cloud processing is inexpensive or even free.

By now, you may be thinking, “What’s the Catch?” Somebody has to pay for these services, as providing them requires nontrivial costs for computer hardware, support staff, and communications. In some cases, the free service is a limited sample to entice you to purchase a more versatile one. In others, you are the product being sold. Your habits and preferences are valuable commodities that advertisers will pay to learn about. For many of us this is a fair trade; in return for the convenience of Google’s search engine, we tolerate the ads in the sidebar and being directed to sites that want to sell to us.

However, there are some security and safety caveats involved. Security is complex for a cloud vendor; your data are stored on the same disks, the same memory, and pass through the same processors as everybody else’s. The process is much like what happens in a commercial laundry or dry cleaner, where everybody’s clothes are tagged and thrown together into a large machine. Afterwards, somebody looks at the tags to get them back to their proper owners.

Contrast this to a bank deposit vault, where only your key can open the box where you place your documents. Even at such competent vendors as Google, there have been in-

stances of data leaking from one customer to another, and many cloud vendors are start-ups who have much less expertise than Google. This means that you should take responsibility for safeguarding your data. For example, if you back up your disk in the cloud, encrypt any files (such as those containing passwords or on-line banking data) that present security risks. I store my passwords using KeePassX, www.KeepassX.org/. Its file is always encrypted on your PC's disk, and you can safely back it up anywhere. I also use Gnu Privacy Guard (gpg), <http://www.gnupg.org/>, to encrypt files and e-mail. (Both of these programs are available for the Windows, Mac, and Linux platforms.) By the way, when you encrypt a file, be sure that only the encrypted version is ever placed in a directory that is backed up in the cloud.

Safety also is not trivial. Vendors do go out of business and, even if they keep operating, they may find that providing cloud services isn't profitable. Not all of them back up their storage, which means that their hardware failures and software bugs can destroy your data. If you use the service for back-up or synchronization, this isn't a problem because the chances of simultaneous failures in the cloud and on your PC is negligible. However, if you store your only copy of your photograph or music collection in the cloud, you are risking disaster. In the case of cloud processing, you should also be concerned about the format in which your data is stored. It does little good to download the file containing your novel if it's stored in a format that only the (now out of business cloud vendor) could read.

Finally, cloud computing is new, so you should expect some glitches.

Haven't Upgraded to Windows 7 Yet?

from <http://windows8news.com/> via May 2011 Bearly Bytes

Brace yourself: Work on Windows 8 is well under way. A pre-release version of Microsoft's next operating system -- which isn't officially scheduled to launch until 2012 -- reportedly leaked onto the Internet over the weekend, leading to an explosion of speculation among Microsoft watchers about what new versions and features the company may be developing.

Chief among the features pinpointed is the widespread implementation of the Ribbon interface, a dynamic, icon-filled replacement for traditional menus unveiled with Microsoft Office 2007. Though controversial, the interface garnered rave reviews and became a love-it-or-leave-it reason to upgrade to the latest productivity suite.

The leaked Windows 8 screenshots suggest Microsoft intends to add the Ribbon interface to the basic operating system itself, wrote enthusiasts Rafael Rivera and Paul Thurrott.

Analysts expect the company will add additional functionality to make the Windows 8 operating system ideal for the growing fleet of tablet computers, including instant-on capability and a Windows app store. But a separate version of the OS specifically designed for tablets may lag behind the standard version, said Trip Chowdry, analyst at Global Equities Research.

"Windows 8 could be available as soon as this holiday season, but Microsoft won't be able to get its ARM version out that quickly," Chowdry told Money magazine. Microsoft has pledged to keep to its three-year operating system release cycle. Windows 7 was unveiled in October 2009, while Vista was released in 2006.

Something's Missing

by Linda Gonse, editor@orcopug.org

I have a problem. Maybe you can solve it for me. In the last couple of weeks, my downloaded file icons don't show up on my Desktop. I specifically download them to the Desktop for temporary use. But, after downloading them, they are missing from the Desktop.

Interestingly, I can go to Start and Explore and the downloaded file is in the list of files on the Desktop. This is consistent with the fact that when I download files to a folder they are visible in it immediately after download. After the computer is rebooted, or restarted, the downloaded file icon then appears on the Desktop. None of the other Desktop icons are affected by the problem and are always visible. Another remedy I tried was pressing F5 to Refresh the Desktop, but it doesn't make the downloaded file icon visible. By the way, icons of files I create in applications and save to the Desktop are always visible!

I have Windows XP Pro, SP3, with all the latest updates. Do you have any suggestions on how to fix this or what causes it? Following are a couple of suggestions from ORCOPUG members that I've already tried.

Answer by Frank Bollinger

This is hard for me to say. I almost never put anything on the desktop but have found locating downloads to be one of the biggest Windows mysteries. It may also depend on the version of Windows. My primary PC has Windows 7 and the download window gives me the option of right clicking and choosing an item something like "Open containing folder." I don't remember this feature in XP, but find it useful now that I'm aware of it.

From the description, it seems to be related to how icons are generated. My first thought is to wonder what has changed on the computer since the last time it worked "properly?" If nothing crucial has been added and you have a "Restore Point" from before the trouble started, it might be worth reverting (I've never used a Restore Point, so can't claim to be familiar with how it works).

Answer by Ted Wirtz

Not sure if this is your problem, but right click on an empty area of your desktop and select "Personalize." On the left side toward the top select "Change Desktop Icons." Verify that "User files" has a checkmark. On my system I have checked all but "Control Panel." You can check that one as well if you want an icon for the control panel. (I just select it from the start menu without the need for an icon.) I'm using Vista Home Premium SP2, but I suspect Win 7 has similar functions if that is what you are using. Perhaps the easiest thing to do is create a shortcut to the downloads folder on the desktop. It was mentioned in the forum response at the following link: <http://yhoo.it/jG3RFV>

GENERAL INTEREST

GANKED by a nOOB

by Vinny La Bash labash (at) spcug.org
Sarasota PCUG, Inc. Sarasota FL
Sarasota PC Monitor April' II www.spcug.org

If you find the above phrase meaningless, you haven't experienced the online social networks where you can have the most fun. We're not talking about Facebook or Twitter. Ditto for other social network sites like MySpace which these days looks like Empty Space.

If you're not playing one of the more popular Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games (MMORPG), you may be missing out on one of the most interesting and fun-filled experiences you can have with a computer. MMORPG is a genre of web based role-playing games in which a very large number of players interact with one another within a virtual game world. You're certainly not alone in this world. It could be inhabited by dozens, hundreds, and in some cases thousands of players. One game, World of Warcraft (WoW) has over a million players.

Most MMORPGs need only a PC to connect to an online server to play. Others require a game console. After storing some basic information about the player, the action starts.

In a MMORPG, you, the player create and control a character represented by an avatar which you direct to explore, solve problems, and find items necessary to complete tasks which take you closer to achieving the ultimate objective of the game. Other tasks may be part of the game such as building and destroying things, fighting opponents, interacting with other characters, assembling tools, earning or otherwise acquiring the local currency, and so on.

There are games which require you to make moral choices which will affect the outcome of the game. For example, you are leading a team of specialists in an attempt to rescue a large group of people from an imminent natural disaster. Because of

the circumstances, which are no one's fault, you can succeed only by leaving an important member of your party behind to ensure the success of the rescue. However, the team member will almost certainly die in the process, and he or she could be crucial to the success of an even more important operation further along in the game.

Some academics devote time to study games that require players to work with currency of one form or another. There is one game that uses bottle caps for money in the context of its virtual world. Characters designed by players have developed sophisticated economies within games, at times with mechanisms to exchange online currency for real money. These "synthetic economies" bear an eerie resemblance to our own world which is remarkable considering that the most popular games have players who come from all parts of the globe. These "synthetic economies" evolve from players of different cultures which means they may be tapping into something fundamental about human nature.

All this has been made possible through the world wide penetration of broadband internet connections. MMORPGs have gained enormous popularity not only in America but in South Korea, Taiwan, and China. Playing a MMORPG might mean you could be a member of a team that is truly international, requiring levels of continuous cooperation from individuals that most governments haven't been able to pull off.

Many of these games require a monthly subscription fee to play but many of them don't. Simply search on "Free MMORPG Games" and your search engine will bring up dozens of these games that you can play for free. Use them to get a sense of how to play before committing any cash to the most popular ones. Don't neglect to go to http://www.mmoglossary.com/mmorpg_terms/l/index.html to get familiar with common game terminology before traveling to an unfamiliar world.

The better you understand the virtual world, the more you can enjoy the experience. Make an effort to understand at least some of the vocabulary. "Ganked" is a combination of two words, **gang kill**, which refers to a group of experienced players ganging up on a new, greenhorn player and killing off his character for amusement. nOOB is a way of referring to a new, inexperienced player. It's a variation of "newbie", but has the additional meaning of clueless. That's why it's spelled ,nOOB to make it resemble boob, a real dummy. Therefore if you're "Ganked by a nOOB" you've experienced the ultimate indignity of MMORPG playing.

Useful Utilities - Bulk Rename

Phil Sorrentino,
Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

Utilities are usually small programs that are intended to do a specific task or a small range of tasks. These tasks are usually designed to help manage and/or tune the computer hardware,

Operating System (OS), or a particular software application. Most of these utilities are free. A good source of these utilities can be found in the SPCUG Monitor Computer Buffet. This regular column in the Monitor discusses and describes sometimes over 30 different free software offerings along with a website from where you can download the software. (Much of this software has been tried by the Monitor Editor or SPCUG members, but occasionally one has not, so be careful in trying something that no one else has ever tried. You might want to ask around before you download something that seems too good to be true. Keep in mind that when you download something from the internet, you could get something you were not expecting. Always be extra careful.)

If you have a digital camera and move the digital images from the camera to your computer, fairly regularly, you might have need for a “utility” that allows you to “in bulk” change the names of images from the names the camera gives to the images, i.e. IMG_5051 or P0705090123. Actually, in the simple case, this can be accomplished with Windows Explorer. Windows Explorer will let you select a list of images (files) and then if you right-click on the selection and then choose Rename, and then rename the first one in the list, all the following will have the same name, followed by a sequential number in parentheses. This can be very useful, but it doesn't give you all the flexibility you might want.

Third-party utilities to the rescue. There are many free utilities that are available for Windows XP and Vista that will allow you to change the names of groups of files. Two of these utilities are *CKRename*, *Bulkrenameutility*. Each of these gives you a variety of ways to change the existing filenames (the existing filenames must be sequential for this to be useful). CKRename options are shown below:

You might want to Insert characters before or after the existing name. Or you might want to auto-number the set of files with the number before or after the existing name. You might even want to change the case of the alpha characters in the existing name. And you might want to do my favorite, substitute one string of characters for another string. I use this feature to make all of my images have file names start with a date. To accomplish this, I substitute for the first character or few characters, the date I took the images.

For example if I have a set of images that are named IMG_5051IMG_5096, I would use the string substitution to replace “IMG_” with “2009-08-15-” which will produce a set of images that are named 2009-08-15-50512009-08-15-5096. With the date as part of the file name, and my picture file chronologically organized, I can guarantee that I will be able to find the images when I look for them in the future. There are many ways to organize your photos, but unless you want to end up with the computer equivalent of a shoe box full of unnamed, un-dated photos, you have to establish a method and then stick to it, religiously. “By date” is just one picture filing

method you can use, “save by events” is another, maybe more popular, method. Any method that makes sense to you is a good method. Just pick a method and then stick to it. A bulk renaming utility can help you specify the names of all of the photos and possibly scans that you will want to include in your “Pictures” file using your file naming method.

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Synchronize Your Bookmarks Between Computers

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS
www.compukiss.com sandy (at) comukiss.com

In today's world, more and more of us are accessing the Internet from several different devices. We may use a computer at work, a tablet PC at home, and a smart phone or a laptop computer when we are on the go. When we bookmark a website at the home, we might like to bring up that bookmarked webpage when we are at the office or when we visit a relative. If we are using the default settings of an Internet browser, we cannot do this. However there is a way to synchronize bookmarks between devices.

Just about every web browser today offers some way to synchronize bookmarks either through an add-in, a toolbar or a setting. Most of these solutions, however, only work if you use the same web browser on each device. For instance, if you use a Firefox add-in called Sync, you can only access your book marks from a device that has Firefox installed. So if you use Firefox at home, but Firefox doesn't work on your mobile device or your mother doesn't happen to have Firefox installed on her computer, you can't easily access your bookmarks while at those places. There are several stand-alone programs that solve this problem by allowing you to synchronize bookmarks between browsers, but I have a better answer.

The best and easiest solution for synchronizing bookmarks and favorites is a free service from Google called Google Bookmarks. I have used Google Bookmarks for several years. This service keeps a copy of all your bookmarks securely in the cloud, so you can access them from any Internet-connected computer or tablet and most smart phones.

To use Google Bookmarks, you simply surf over to www.google.com/bookmarks. If you already have a Google account from using Gmail, Google Calendar or another Google service, you can just sign in and add Bookmarks to your account. If you don't have a Google account, you can sign up

for the free Google account and activate Google Bookmarks right from this page.

When you add the Google Bookmarks to your Google Account you will be asked if you want to copy your current bookmarks or favorites from your web browser. You will want to do this, unless your bookmarks or favorites have become so unruly that you would like to start with a clean slate.

Once you have the Google Bookmarks set up, the easiest way to access your new bookmarks is to install the Google Toolbar, which is a free download available at www.google.com/toolbar. You should install this toolbar on the computer that you use most often in the web browser that you usually use. For instance, if you use Internet Explorer on your home computer, installing the Google Toolbar there will give you quick access to your Google Bookmarks as well as some additional features.

If you are using another computer that has the Google Toolbar installed, you can simply log into your Google account to access your bookmarks on that computer. On computers and mobile devices that don't have the Google Toolbar, you can log into your Google account and access your bookmarks at www.google.com/bookmarks. Google also has a small icon that you can drag to the links bar of any browser to access your Google bookmarks. It is available on the same page. Just click "Add Bookmark" at your Google Bookmarks page and you will see a blue box marked "Google Bookmark" that can be added to your web browser toolbar.

The only difficult part about this whole process is remembering to use the Google toolbar or icon to create your bookmarks rather than using your browser bookmark icon. Once you get in the habit of doing that, you are good to go.

Using the Google Bookmarks offers two additional perks. First, their bookmark page is extremely well organized. If you have ever tried to delete, rename, or rearrange your bookmarks or favorites in Internet Explorer, Firefox, or any other web browser, you know that this can be a trying task. Google Bookmarks, however, makes it easy. Just surf over to the Google Bookmarks page. As long as you are logged in to Google, you will see all of your bookmarks and find that it is easy to work with them.

The second perk is that Google has recently introduced a feature called "Lists" to their bookmarks. This feature lets you create a list of websites that revolve around one topic. It is a great way to research a topic, plan a trip, or organize an event. You can share your lists with selected people if you need to collaborate on any project. Google will also give you suggestions that pertain to the items in your list and sometimes these are very useful. So if you decide to try Google Bookmarks, you may also want to try the list feature.

If you use multiple devices, Google Bookmarks will keep your bookmarks in sync. Although this may only be a small step in keeping your world organized, being in sync can give you a very good feeling.

HARDWARE NOTES & TIPS

Question on USB Devices

Danbury Area Computer Society newsletter May 2011

Q - I have frequent and increasing problems with USB devices. They are often not recognized on one port and then work fine when plugged into another port.

D - Everyone has USB experiences to share which I will try to summarize. First, not all USB (universal serial bus) ports are created equal. While USB is a standard, it is a very flexible one that allows for all sorts of devices, from the lowly mouse to storage devices of all manners (some not yet invented when USB was first introduced) to intelligent devices like printers and scanners. The root of the not equal problem stems from the way USB hubs can be attached to each other to branch one port into many. For example, most desktop computers, despite the name, live on the floor next to or beneath a desk making access to the ports inconvenient. So, most people buy a USB hub that can sit on the desk while connected to a port on the computer. Now there are four, six or even more ports handy to plug in a camera or a thumb drive. Now it's convenient to plug in several devices. The problem is that in reality, all of those devices are sharing the single port on the computer and thus must share the bandwidth and interrupts of that one port. Compounding this problem is the fact that on most desktop machines, pairs of ports are connected to a single root hub.

Thus two high-bandwidth devices, like a network adapter, scanner, color printer or a hard drive can cause problems if connected to two ports on the same root hub. Here is a screen grab from my laptop of Device Manager showing the USB hubs and controllers on this computer. Here in my office, this machine is connected to a docking station that adds four USB ports along with video, keyboard, etc., so the list of USB stuff is long. Some are ghost devices with installed drivers but the device is not connected. Even more unfortunate is that there does not appear to be any way to tie a device in the list to a physical port other than when you see something obvious like camera or scanner. The base drivers for such devices are listed elsewhere in Device Manager.

The discussion at the meeting centered mostly on how USB most peripheral devices draw power from the USB port. This is a fantastic convenience in that it eliminates the need to plug in a special wall wart and run a wire to the device to provide power. Unfortunately this is another not created equal situation as not all ports provide the full power specified in the USB specification. Devices like portable hard drives often need more power than is available. The result can destroy the USB hub built into the computer system board. Just like the bandwidth problem above, a non-powered or passive accessory hub can make the problem worse. If you purchase a USB hub for your desk, make sure it comes with a wall wart to provide power to the devices you plug into the hub. An underpowered device can cause problems in ways not obviously related to power. One member even mentioned a special cable with two plugs on the computer end and one for the device so the device could draw power from two ports on the computer. Once again, try not to plug both plugs into the same root hub.

Help Lines

HARDWAREHELP	AdvisorNo.
Reformat Hard Disk, FDISK	2, 4, 5
Install Hard Drive, CD-ROM/RW	2, 4, 5
Install Video Card	7
Partitioning Hard Drives	2
Internet/Intranet	6, 7
Audio Cards	4
MPs Files, WMA Files, WAV Files	3, 4
Burning CD's	3, 5
Homesite	7
Net Objects	7

SOFTWAREHELP	AdvisorNo.
Win 95/98/ME/2K/NT/XP	2, 3, 4, 7
Win 7	4, 7
Microsoft Word	2, 7
Microsoft Excel	4
Microsoft PowerPoint	4
WordPerfect	1, 7
Norton/Symantec AntiVirus	2, 3, 6, 7
Norton System Works	2, 7
CompuPic / CompuPic Pro	3, 7
Winzip, WinRAR	6
Ccleaner	3, 4
Outlook, Outlook Express	2
Internet Explorer	2, 7
RegSeeker	3, 5
Instant Messaging	2
Installing Software after Reformatting	5
Deleting Files; Wiping	6

ADVISORS

Name	Phone	Hours
[1] Fred Shelton	(253)752-0120	Variable
[2] Bob Henkel	(253)537-6732	8A-8P any day
[3] Tom Stepanek	(253)922-7939	7-9P Mon-Fri
[4] Carl Tenning	(206)824-3843	6-9P Mon-Fri
[5] Oclad Wesley	(253)212-0352	6-9P
[6] Bob Thomson	(253)752-5582	Variable
[7] Ray Mills	(360)692-7568	6-9P Mon-Sat

Tacoma Open Group for Microcomputers (TOG)

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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 13 Jun 2011 -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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Deadline: 15th of this month to appear
in next months' issue, if room

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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!



TOGGLE

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.

Program Presentation

Carl Tenning and Bob Thomson will demonstrate how to prepare a slide show using Microsoft PowerPoint and OpenOffice Impress. Several online examples will also be shown.