TOGGLE

THE MICROCOMPUTER TURN (ON)

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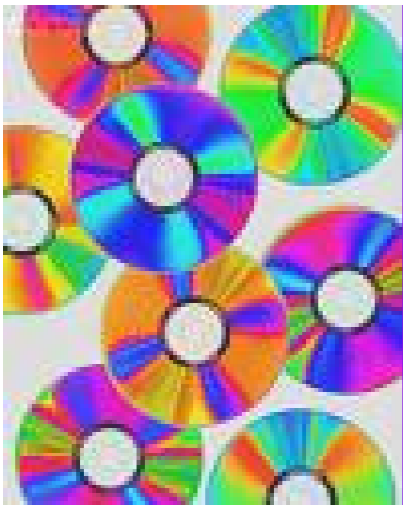
IN THIS ISSUE



UPDATE

Communications

In *Digital Photo Sig (LA)* the author describes some computer related digital photographic techniques which you may find interesting. While we are not a large enough group to have our own photographic SIG we can learn from others. Take a look.

In *Dangers of the Internet* the author discusses several privacy issues in some detail. She also discusses the dangers of providing more personal information than is necessary and not being mindful of the near impossiblity of ever retrieving it once it is posted.

In *iPV6 Is Coming* the author notes that *''some of the big names in open source software will be involved with the new Internet Protocol, version 6 (IPv6) which will be needed to replace the current Internet Protocol, version 4 (IPv4).''* He states later that: *''Internet designers have been working on the new IPv6 protocol to solve issues with the old system. It will have 128-bit addresses which will provide for a possible of 340 trillion, trillion, trillion addresses (3.4 x 10^38).''* Read all about it.

General Interest

In *Social Media Addicition* the author Sandy Berger discusses the new phenonomenon of people being so absorbed in their digital devices that they are so busy digitally interacting with others people that they miss the wonders of nature and other worthwhile attributes of their surroundings.

In *Cell Phone Lingo* the author discusses the changes that have taken place in cell phone technology and the confusion of designations from G0 through G5 and on up. Reading this may help you understand a little bit more of the terminology.

Hardware

In *Disk Manitenance* the author goes over the provisions built into Windows to take care of this chore. You have probably used a similar tools in the past. The idea, of course, is that fragmentaion of files which occurs during use slows down the search procedure when you try to access a file on your hard drive. Defragging should restore your machine's file retrieval speed to its original condition.

Software

In *Laptop Misery* the author describes a utilty which disables the touchpad while you are typing so that even if you inadvertently brush the touchpad, the cursor will stay in place in the typed material. It is called *Touchpad Pal.* He gives you the address of the site where you can download it for free.

In *Registry First Aid* the author says that he has researched registry cleaners before and found them wanting. However, he likes a commercial product called Registry First Aid and discusses its features in the article. Worth a read if you are concerned about registry problems.

COMMUNICATIONS NOTES & TIPS

Digital Photo SIG

by Elliot Silverstein
Los Angeles Computer Society June 2011

High Dynamic Range (HDR) Photography

This is a technique or group of techniques by which a scene having a larger range of tonal values than can be captured by a single exposure can be reproduced by combining two or more exposures. These exposures can be made by adjusting the shutter speeds so different frames capture the dark, medium and light portions of the scene. Then, using manual editing techniques, with each imagein a separate layer, one can combine these images to effectively compress the scene luminance values so that all the desired details from the light, medium, and dark portions of the original scene are present in the final image.

There are also several commercial software products that can simplify the process of combining the images, and that offer a number of adjustments that could be difficult to accomplish by use of a simple photo editing program.

The concepts and processes were demonstrated by showing a video from an online source.

Steganography

Following the break, Gilbert Ialongo gave an interesting discussion and demonstration of steganography, which is a technique by which a message can be hidden in a photo so the observer is unaware that any message exists. It can later be decoded by someone who knows that the message is contained in the photo, and who knows the algorithm by which the message was encoded. After the encoded image is inserted, the photo is essentially indistinguishable from the original.

Let us compare steganography with cryptography. Cryptography presents one with a message that cannot be understood until it is decrypted. Steganography, on the other hand, presents the observer with one or many photos; the observer does not know that a photo contains a message, so he does not even know he should attempt decryption.

From your (LACS) Editor:

For you, Dear Reader, from an Encyclopedia, for further understanding:

Steganography

Ste gan o gra phy (ste-g&n-o'gr&-fe) (n.) The art and science of hiding information by embedding messages within other, seemingly harmless messages. Steganography works by replacing bits of useless or unused data in regular computer files (such as graphics, sound, text, HTML, or even floppy disks) with bits of different, invisible information. This hidden information can be plain text, cipher text, or even images.

Steganography sometimes is used when encryption is not permitted. Or, more commonly, steganography is used to supplement encryption. An encrypted file may still hide information using steganography, so even if the encrypted file is deciphered, the hidden message is not seen.

Special software is needed for steganography, and there are freeware versions available at any good download site.

Steganography (literally meaning covered writing) dates back to ancient Greece, where common practices consisted of etching messages in wooden tablets and covering them with wax, or tattooing a shaved messenger's head, letting his hair grow back, then shaving it again when he arrived at his contact point.

Cryptography

cryp to gra phy (krip ta gr;) fe (n.) The art of writing or solving codes.

Cryptography (or cryptology; from Greek *, kryptos, ''hidden, secret''; and *, grapho, ''I write'', or -*, -logia, respectively) is the practice and study of hiding information. Modern cryptography intersects the disciplines of mathematics, computer science, and engineering.

The discipline concerned with communication security (eg, confidentiality of messages, integrity of messages, sender authentication, non-repudiation of messages, and many other related issues), regardless of the used medium such as pencil and paper or computers.

Cryptography is the study and practice of protecting information by data encoding and transformation techniques. It is the art of hiding information to unauthorized eyes.

The primary goal of cryptography is to conceal data to protect it against unauthorized third-party access by applying encryption. The more theoretical or mathematical effort is required for an unauthorized third party to recover data, the stronger is the encryption.

* TOGGLE Ed Note: The original has words in Greek script not available to this editor.

Dangers of the Internet

by Ann Andrews, Topeka PC Users Club
(From the presentation for the
February 2010 General Meetingof Topeka PC Users Group)

Most people who are using computers know about viruses, malware, spyware, Trojans, etc. But what about personal information being shared with anyone who looks for it? You think it is not a problem for anyone to have your address and phone number; after all it is in the phone directory, on all of your utility bills, and your legal records; right? Read on - this article has the specifics about why not to share your personal information.

The most common ways information gets into the public domain is through your phone company. Even if you specifically ask to be unlisted, your phone number and address will be in the directory assistance database, though not available to those asking for your phone number. Once you are in the directory assistance database, and then call and take your name out to try to make your number unlisted, in many cases, it is simply too late, as making it unlisted just means it will not be printed in the phone book, but will still be in the directory database and the original listing will have already been distributed (e.g., the Blue Book for businesses). Usually, only elected officials and law enforcement people are kept out of these databases. But what about the officials who are no longer in elected office? What about their children or their wife and family? Are they protected as well?

Many of the information search database websites state specifically that ''this information was NOT gathered from the BILLING data''.

Most people think that by having a cell phone that they are protected by law. Check again. If you are using a cell phone for your primary number, then no; that cell number is NOT protected and is actually shared with everyone by every office that you give it to.

In most local counties and states, any property transaction, whether it is a sale or purchase of property, will result in a public record of that transaction. Please note, in many cases these records contain full names, full addresses, maiden names, and listed/unlisted phone numbers.

Voter registration records are publicly available information in some states where allowed. Voter registration provides the most recent address information, as it is also used by many courts to issue jury duty notices.

Filling out any sweepstakes cards or entry forms to win a car, vacation, or any item or service will result in your personal information being distributed to a variety of not only marketing companies, and thus this information will be made publicly available to databases collecting such personal information. People who are surprised by what they find out about themselves are only now becoming aware of what can happen; in effect supplied by the Internet boom of personal information data websites in the U.S. Identity fraud was usually done by someone (family) very close to the person whose identity has been stolen, because it was much more difficult to get a person's Social Security number as well as the mother's maiden name. This is not true today with the wealth of information available at the touch of a button.

But the truth is; your personal information has been out there for years; it only was not as easily available as with the Internet today. It's is a question of who should have access to it - you, or the people selling your personal information to other companies in order to market things to you; or simply to help other people to find you?

On the Internet; individuals' personal information is available from the official public records custodian or repository to anyone who requests them (no ID is required). In order for any database of public records to be useful, the databases must contain all of the information in the public records offices. If you have a compelling privacy or security issue, you may wish to contact the official custodians of those public records that contain sensitive information about you, such as your county's land records office, to determine how to remove your information from the public record. (The process of having public records sealed typically requires a court order.) This process will ensure that the information is not available to the public, or to any other Internet public records information provider.

In addition to public records, personal information may be publicly or commercially available. Publicly available information consists of online and offline information that is generally available but is not maintained by a government agency, such as names, addresses and telephone numbers of individuals and businesses, professional licensing and trade organization information, press releases and newspaper articles and content from blogs, church websites, even yearly donation rolls or social networking sites. Commercial records consist of information that is maintained by enterprises and is available for purchase on the Internet, such as marketing and telemarketing lists, phone connect and disconnect information, and business profile data.

In New York - Effective June 8, 2009, drug offenders who have satisfied court requirements can seal the portion of their public records that contain their criminal history.

No Such Thing as ''Private'' Public Records

The world of public records is a fascinating arena of never-ending disputes. After reading about some of the wars raging on in the government arena, it is easy to understand why the President is not allowed to text or e-mail. It is simply too much trouble to try and keep it private.

This item focuses on the situation in North Carolina. There, government employees are unhappy with local journalists' efforts to get access to e-mails sent and received by all county, state elected and appointed officials. Why are they so upset? Everyone agrees that all e-mails sent and received by government officials are public record. Well, the people behind the

government think the paper should mind its own business because, like any other employees, they have used work e-mail servers for personal e-mails.

The issue here is whether those using a government agency's e-mail system should be allowed to decide which e-mail is personal and which concerns government business. Apparently, the North Carolina School of Government advises local governments to do so at their own discretion.

The state's Press Association strongly disagrees. They have proof that the honor system doesn't work. A similar e-mail investigation by a local paper has led to the resignation of several top officials from North Carolina's former Governor Easley's office. Lesson learned: Employees who have screwed up some major project might take it very personally, but so do the taxpayers who have paid for those costly snafus. The taxpayers would very much like to see those ''personal'' e-mails as part of public record.

The law states that documents created in the course of doing public business are open for public inspection; it does not define ''personal'' or ''confidential'' or specify such records exempt from inclusion in public records. Clearly, if you send the e-mail from a government server, expect it to be subject to public scrutiny. It's simple, really: Learn to use your private e-mail account for personal correspondence; it's what's expected from private-sector employees. However, remember that the law also says e-mail related to public affairs sent from private accounts is still a part of public record.

The North Carolina Press association feels that tracking government officials' e-mails has become one of the most effective methods for the public to fully understand the decision process of public officials. The public records law established a process that helps us hold government officials accountable. The issue of ''private'' e-mails is a giant loophole in that law. In other words, if you are a government employee, remember: Your business is our business.

But what about people who don't want to be found by others? For example, the victims of domestic violence, harassment or the victims of stalkers?

This is a critical concern, and it presents a difficult challenge. That's because the solution involves more than simply removing one's personal information from one particular database. While some states, including Massachusetts, enforce the change or the removal of a person's personal information, opting out of every single database doesn't fix the problem. Simply put, the data information replicates too quickly in the information industry, and trying to remove every trace of personal information is like trying to plug hundreds of thousands of holes in a leaking dam. The only way to prevent one from being found by others is to go to the core: the local government state and public information level. People under threat are advised to seek help from their state's courts. It is clear though that public official have not thought through this part as if they were in danger and checked all possibilities.

What if I'm not under threat but want to protect myself anyway?

In general, some states offer the Address Confidentiality Program - which entitles you to a P.O. Box or non-identifiable address for all state and legal documents - and requires evidence of a viable threat in order to participate. Even if granted, you must still seek court assistance to mask information when you do things like buy a home, get a driver's license, or register to vote.

The problem with this program is there are many loopholes, that the governments who say they are protecting you are actually (perhaps not understanding) allowing information to still be shared about you; note the phone is in your name, the electric utility is in your name, and the water utility is in your name. At the moment Kansas Gas Service (could be other utilities in other states as well) is the ONLY utility that does not share information (except with local law enforcement). Besides the phone company sharing your information, the next worst offender is your own local government sharing all of their records, property ownership, and property evaluations. Some states do not share certain public records, but most laws to create these changes became laws only after the initial sharing of information, so the majority of all information is still out there. For example: Kansas, in 1994, decided not to share motor vehicle information but it's too little too late; good only if you got your Driver's License in Kansas after 1994. In Kansas, 2009 Domestic Abuse records were removed from Kansas Public Records. Wait a minute; wasn't this available so that people could check if someone had a record for domestic abuse?

Learn to use your private e-mail account for personal correspondence;

I would prefer that my personal information NOT be shared

Does your local government / state government / utilities share your information with ANYONE other than law enforcement? If they do, then ALL of your personal information is out there on the Internet and they are not doing you any favors by doing so (except wanting more tax money from you). What would happen if an individual asks that their personal information NOT be shared? I did and was told the sharing of information was the price for keeping up with technology and that my local government wants to keep up with other states in technology; I would prefer that my personal information NOT be shared by the local government / state government / utilities, but I am allowed not to opt out in this. **Why?**

In Kansas, we have the United States 14th Amendment as well as for the Kansas Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. ' 552a, as

well as Kansas KSA 45-215 to 45-223 that are supposed to protect our personal privacy. These laws are being ignored by local government / utilities / state by putting individuals personal information and local government / utilities / state records on the Internet as a way of keeping up with technology.

Primary Information source - the local level. Basic Searches of how information is shared. Some personal information databases have certain information going back 40 years, usually because of the personal information shared by the local/state government and the local utilities.

- First Name; Middle Name or Initials; Last Name
- Physical Address
- E-mail Address / IP Address / Website
- Property Values
- Date / Year of Birth / Age
- Maiden and Married Last Names for Females
- Names of Ex-Spouses (with all of their related information)
- Names of Significant Other/Roommates (with all of their related information)
- Names of children (with all of their related information)
- Nicknames or Aliases
- High School(s) Attended
- Universities Attended
- Military Service
- Personal Hobbies
- Known Relatives
- Known Associates, Friends and Co-Workers
- City, State of Birth
- City, State Raised In
- Current and Previous Addresses - Rented or Owned
- All listed/unlisted Landline or Cell Phone Numbers
- Professional Background
- Companies Worked For
- Organizations Involved With
- Businesses Owned

Listed is how people find information about you and your family. These are just a few of the searches possible, there are many more available.

People Searching =

People Search Classmates Search Friend Search
Family Member Search
Lost Love Search Military Search Email Address Search
Street Address Search
Unlisted Phone Search Cell Phone Search Zip code Search
Social Network Search

Records Searches =

Death Record Search Marriage Record Search
Birth Record Search
Divorce Record Search Adoption Record Search
Ancestry Record Search
State Record Search Credit Reports
Military Record Search
Public Record Search Obituaries Search

Background Checks =

Employment Screening Tenant Screening
Background Search SSN Verification
VIN Number Search Business Name Search
Online Detective Sites

Criminal Records =

Police Record Search Criminal Search Sex Offender Search
Driving Record Search Prison Inmate Search
\Domestic Abuse Record

Reverse Records =

Reverse Phone Number Search
Reverse Fax Number Search
Reverse Street Address Search
Reverse Email Address Search
Reverse IP Address Search
Reverse Web Site Address Search

Currently Facebook is the largest of 250 plus social networking groups. The statistics point out a trend that usually the people are on the networking web pages are in the 20's-30's group, where as the numbers go down fast for older people. Why? The younger generation was brought up with computers and so they see no danger to their personal information being on the Internet. Seventy-five percent of high school students have posted enough personal information about themselves that they can be found by anybody.

Already there are problems that people are finding out about.

Credit Reports are being checked. Think of your home insurance agent checking about your online credit report. My mother had never had to use her home insurance for damages; but after her credit report was checked by her insurance company, her home insurance rates were raised and her insurance agent could not answer her questions why her HOME insurance had checked her credit report to begin with.

Minors - incidents that occurred (DUI) records are being used to deny young adults entrance to college as well as jobs. Their futures are in jeopardy.

What has been posted on these pages (Facebook, MySpace, etc.) has already cost people their wives, their husbands, their jobs; because anything about you that is posted just ONCE and removed shortly thereafter can follow you to your grave.

Want to know just where you stand as far as this information nightmare?

Go to **http://www.google.com**. Type just your name, see how many results you get.

Results 1 - 10 of about 6,040,000 for Charles Curtis (for example).

So you think that is OK; you can't be found, right? Want to try again?

Go to **http://www.google.com**. Click on the Advanced Search on the right side of the search bar.

Type just your first and last name as you use them on the second line. ''This exact wording or phrase''. Next - go to Results per page; change this from 10 to 100. Next - Language, change to English (unless non English speaking country change to appropriate Language). Click on Advanced Search.

To eliminate the resulting amount of web pages, where the Google Search bar will have your name, add your state outside of the quotes, and then search again. Making these changes will allow you to see more pages at once. Limit your search to English websites. Adding your state will define the focus to a much smaller range so you get websites that are more likely to have your personal information and not just a part of your name.

For Example ''**Charles Curtis**''

Results 1 - 100 of about 197,000 English pages for ''CharlesCurtis''.

For Example ''Charles Curtis'' Kansas. Results 1 - 100 of about 37,600 English pages for ''Charles Curtis'' Kansas.

Do you see the difference making these changes made in your search? Instead of seeing just 10 results of 6,040,000 from the original search; adding just the quotes narrowed your search to 197,000 English pages, but when the state you are in is added; you now have even less hits, so you are much more likely to find websites that have your personal information and sharing it with others. Check out the websites. Is it you?

If you use ANY of the social networking accounts - Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Flickr, etc. - I can guarantee you that your personal information is being shared with others as you 'voluntarily' gave them this information when signing up. The information is not considered private and making your profile private does not prevent them from sharing your personal information. So far people have tried to sue for invasion of privacy - both Facebook and MySpace but these people lost because of the technicality that they 'gave' them the personal information originally.

The best thing is not to use any of the social networking accounts at all and e-mail complaints to those who suggest for you to use them ''to know more of the story''; or that the use of these social networking accounts is the only way you can contact them, as these social networking websites have become quite popular with TV networks, TV news, daily newspapers and other channels of communication.

Personally, I have erased my information from the web (at least as much as possible using Reputation Defender; I have ''My Privacy''); it took six months to get my information cleared but at least I feel more comfortable.

On **https://www.reputationdefender.com/** there is a new tool: ''Web Visibility Score''. Type in your name and it will search several different search engines, check the results, click on 'me' or 'not me'; then what is your score? Mine is minus 200, 'I cannot be found'. What is yours? This search is free to show you just what someone else can find on you.

I am so pleased with my results with the product of Reputation Defender; I added it to my website. This is a work in progress, ongoing research on Vice President Charles Curtis who was born in North Topeka (originally known as Eugene) when this was still Kansas Territory. This is the ONLY website that you can find me on with free search engines. I can still be found on legal searches where my personal information has been provided by the local government / utilities / state records.

But just using a data removal program is not the end of your work; you need to make sure that your e-mail provider changes its IP every use, that your website changes it's IP, or that your host server hides the information. More cost to you - yes; but for me it is well worth it. Then double check using the Reverse search looking for your personal information periodically, just to make sure your information is gone. I recommend having a router, as well as IP changing software as additional protection. Some people might think this overkill; far better to have protection than to later think about why did I not get it earlier.

To check out other data removal websites, using different search engines, your results can be from 8,000,000 websites to 17,000,000 websites depending on which search engine you use to search with.

If you want to learn how people can find certain other people, check this out. There is a website called **http://www.hotsheet.com** that is nothing but search engines for all different types of categories. Many people use the ones under Research to find information out about people.

LexisNexis - Granddaddy of all databases -

http://www.lexisnexis.com/our-solutions/us-solutions/

''In the United States, LexisNexis. is a leading provider of information and business solutions to professionals in a variety of industries- legal, risk solutions, corporate, government, law enforcement, accounting and academic.''

The previous statement is on the home page of LexisNexis. This database is not shared with individuals but rather businesses.

LexisNexis Opt Out -

LexisNexis requires a letter showing proof of being in law enforcement or legal documents requiring protection.

http://www.lexisnexis.com/privacy/for-consumers/opt-out-of-lexisnexis.aspx

Intelius Opt Out - Intelius requires a letter with copies of legal documents of requiring protection.

http://www.intelius.com/privacy-faq.php Learn how people can find certain other people.

IPv6 is Coming

by Cal Esneault, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, Louisiana,
http://www.clickers.org, cjesne (at) bellsouth.net.
Originally published in Cajun Clickers Computer News.

Canonical (Ubuntu Linux) and Google recently announced they would participate in a 24-hour trial of IPv6 on June 8, 2011, along with Facebook, Yahoo, and others. This means that some of the big names in open source software will be involved with the new Internet Protocol, version 6 (IPv6) which will be needed to replace the current Internet Protocol, version 4 (IPv4).

To get to an Internet address, we usually type in a name, such as Clickers.org or Google.com. Software then goes to a distributed database from a Domain Name Server (DNS) and uses a table to translate this into a 32-bit numerical identifier. The identifiers are split into four 8 bit segments. Since 8 binary digits (bits) can span the range from 0 - 255, we sometimes see these addresses as the decimal equivalents separated by periods. For example, 192.168.1.2 is a typical address for our internal networks when using routers. If we use the last ''block'' (last 8 bits), we could theoretically have 256 computers in this network. The total number of distinct addresses in IPv4 is 256 x 256 x 256 x256 = 4.3 billion. When the Internet first started, no one could conceive that more than 4 billion addresses would be needed, but the need for each home network and each mobile phone to have an address is straining that concept. Recently, the last big ''blocks'' were issued to area centers for distribution. The problem is not as bleak as it may seem since many addresses can be issued temporarily, some early users took more than they really need and can give some back, and only one address is needed for a private network which handles many computers within its structure. Some believe that we will run out of freely available addresses by the end of 2011, and that new addresses will have to wait for an old one to be freed up.

Internet designers have been working on the new IPv6 protocol to solve issues with the old system. It will have 128-bit addresses which will provide for a possible of 340 trillion, trillion, trillion addresses (3.4 x 10^38). This at first seems silly today since each person on earth could have trillions of addresses, but it becomes more reasonable when you realize that any electronic device in your home (which will soon be a computer) and any device in a factory or automobile could have a unique address for control purposes. Also, it is hoped this will be sufficient for a very long time so that the change will be permanent in even our grandchildren's lifetimes.

The addresses for IPv6 will be split into eight 16-bit units. Since the decimal number for each unit is large (2^16 = 65,536), the addresses will be in hexadecimal notation (a = 10, b = 11, . . . , f =15). An example address might look like fe80:0:0::200:f8ff:fe21:67cf where fields are separated by a colon, leading zero's can be omitted, and blank fields can be represented by multiple colon marks. There will be a protocol which allows current IPv4 addresses to be contained within the new IPv6 address. If all works as hoped, we won't care since our DNS resources will fill in numbers for us when we type in Clickers.org, etc., just like it happens today.

Modern operating systems (Windows, Mac OS, Linux, BSD) have already been configured to allow for IPv6 protocol. However, your current router and your ISP (Internet Service Provider) equipment may not be ready. In complex computer networks, all of the interactions between equipment and older software are not sufficiently known. Therefore, the test on June 8 will be the first of probably many to debug the issues which will have to be addressed. A similar situation was envisioned when we moved into the 21st century (known as the Y2K issue, where ambiguity between dates could occur since early software only used the last two numbers for years).

In that case, the situation was handled well and none of the dire predictions about airplane crashes and business shut-down came to pass. It did, however, take a lot of work and effort to prevent chaos. Will IPv6 be a big event, or just a problem for computer professionals? We don't know yet, but open source folks are in there with everyone else to help keep our systems functioning.

GENERAL INTEREST

Social Media Addiction

by Sandy Berger (sandy(at)compukiss.com), CompuKiss
(www.compukiss.com)

Are we becoming a society that misses out on the real world because we are so focused on the online world of social media? Here's how I see it.

This morning, I arrived at my bank about 10 minutes before it opened. I stood in front of the bank building breathing the fresh clean autumn air and was enthralled by the sun glistening on the leaves of the three magnificent magnolia trees across the street. I turned my attention to the autumn color bursting forth from several other trees as I wondered about how they kept the entire area so pristine. Several early morning exercise seeking walkers and joggers greeted me with a hearty ''good morning''. It was truly a magnificent morning.

A few minutes after I arrived at the bank a young man drove up in his truck. He was quite obviously also waiting for the bank to open. I noticed that he was intent on thumb typing on his smart phone. At exactly 9 am, when he emerged from his truck, I asked what he had been doing. He replied that he was checking his Facebook page and accessing Twitter on his smart phone.

This is the regrettable side effect of today's technology. While this fellow was engaged in social media on his phone, he was missing the real world and real people. His actions are quite typical of twenty- and thirty- somethings in today's world.

At a garage sale that I held recently, I had a lot of wonderful people who were friendly and talkative, but I also had several young people who never even said hello to me because they were engaged in conversations on their cell phones. I also recently met a girl who said she went into a panic because she found herself in a line at the grocery store and was without her cell phone. She would normally check her Facebook and Twitter pages if she found herself with a few extra minutes of time. In fact, she routinely checked her Facebook and Twitter pages whenever she was stopped at a red light.

I realize that online social media is a big draw today. In fact, you can hardly be in business today if you don't have a Facebook or Twitter account. Where five years ago we were seeing advertising with Internet addresses everywhere, today we are seeing advertising with ''See our Facebook Page'' at the bottom.

HARDWARE NOTES & TIPS

Disk Maintenance

by Les Townsing, Melbourne PCUG, Australia, http://www.melbpc.org.au, editor (at) melbpc.org.au. Originally published in PC UPDATE

Cleaning up your hard drive can restore your PC's Performance.

There are three important utilities provided in Windows that help to improve a PC's performance:

Disk Clean Up
Error Checking (previously known as Check Disk or Scan Disk)
Disk Defragmenter
Disk Clean Up

Over time, unnecessary data and ''leftover files'' gradually collect in all PCs as you use them. As this garbage collects it slowly clogs up your system, taking up space and making performance slower and slower. The Disk Cleanup tool helps you free up space on your hard disk by searching for files that you can safely delete.

There are a number of ways to start Disk Clean Up. My preference is:

1. Open 'Windows Explorer' and right click on the required drive
2. Select 'Properties,' click the 'General' tab, and then click 'Disk Cleanup'
3. Disk Clean Up will then scan the drive and provide you with a list of possible actions and an estimate of the space that can be saved

Depending on your system, a number of different file types are analysed when the initial disk scan is conducted. After the analysis completes you can choose what to do with them. The analysed files include:

- Downloaded program files
- Temporary Internet files
- Recycle Bin
- Temporary Remote Desktop files
- Setup Log files
- Backup files for a previous operating system
- Offline files
- Compressed old files

In addition to the Disk Cleanup tab, the More Options tab offers further opportunities for freeing up hard drive space. There is nothing on this tab that isn't available elsewhere within Windows in standalone fashion and some will be dealt with below.

There may be other categories that appear in your Disk Cleanup window, but in all cases, highlighting the item will display an explanation of the category in the Description area.

Error Checking

Previously called Scan Disk or Check Disk, this utility is known as Error Checking within the Windows XP / Vista / 7 system.

Error Checking will check the hard disk for defects in its platters. It will also check file systems. If errors are found it will attempt to fix them.

These errors are found inside your hard drive may be caused for a number of reasons. These include:
- system crashes
- applications that have been improperly closed
- the existence of harmful programs such as viruses

It is important to know that Error Checking is not a data recovery tool. Its job is to maintain the file system, and if your directories or files get in the way of this objective, they will be sacrificed!

Before checking volumes or drives for errors, make sure that all other programs are closed, and disable your screen saver.

To run Error Checking:

1. Open 'Windows Explorer' and right click on the required drive
2. Select 'Properties,' click the 'Tools' tab, and then click 'Check Now'
3. You will be given the options of automatically fixing file system errors and recovering bad sectors
   Note: Vista and Windows 7 will not allow Error Checking to run while the system is operating. It must be scheduled to run at boot time.

Disk Defragmentation

When files are created, deleted or modified it's almost a certainty they will become fragmented. Fragmented means the file is not stored in one place in its entir

Fragmentation causes the drive heads to search for all the pieces of a file in different locations. The more fragmented files there are on a drive, the more performance and reliability suffer.

The Disk Defragmenter Utility is designed to reorganize fragmented files and optimize their placement on the hard drive for increased reliability and performance.

To run Disk Defragmenter:

1. Open 'Windows Explorer' and right click on the required drive
2. Select 'Properties,' click the 'Tools' tab, and then click 'Defragment Now'

When Disk Defragmenter first opens you'll see a list of the hard drives displayed at the top of the screen. Clicking on the 'Analyse' button will display a graphical representation of the amount of defragmentation on the selected drive.

When the Defragment button is clicked, a graphical representation of the defragmentation during and after defragmentation is progressively shown. This graphical representation does not appear in Vista or Windows 7. You can schedule the Disk Defragmentation Utility to automatically run at a pre-determined time in both Vista and Windows 7.

For the technically minded, you are also given the opportunity to view a defragmentation report after the drive is analysed and when it has been defragmented.

For the majority of users, the Disk Defragmentation Utility included with Windows is sufficient to keep the hard drives in relatively good condition. If you are the type that wants to extract the best possible performance from a system, consider upgrading to one of the premium defragmenter products.

SOFTWARE NOTES & TIPS

Laptop Misery

Laptop users of the world, UNITE!!! Enough of this jumping-bean cursor, already! You know the scenario - John Doe is busy typing away on his laptop when he notices that, even though he is striking keys, no text is appearing on the lin*. Uh-oh, his thumb has accidentally brushed the touchpad, sending the cursor scooting off somewhere. So he has to search the screen for the errant text, delete it, re-position the cursor, and then re-enter the text. It's exasperating the first time this happens, but it can happen again and again - and again - until poor John is ready to fling the laptop through the nearest window!

If this sounds like you, then you need the help of *TouchPad Pal* - a small, free utility that that turns off the touchpad whenever you are entering text in a text editing program (e.g., Notepad, Wordpad, WordPerfect, MS Word, etc.). After installing *TouchPad Pal* on your laptop (you can put a shortcut in the Startup menu and it will load each time you boot up), if you then inadvertently brush the touchpad while typing, the cursor stays where you intended for it to be. A godsend! Try it. Who knows, you may discover that your high blood pressure is under control again!

You can download *TouchPad Pal* (for free) from: ***http://tpp.desofto.com/***

There are several other utilities there including *Laptop Assistant* and *SpamFilter* - Toggle Ed.

Registry First Aid

Reviewed by Herb Goldstein, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
Apr 2011www.spcug.org, pcugedit (at) verizon.net

Solving the Registry Cleaning Dilemma

Nothing much happens in Windows without control by that mysterious architecture known as the Registry. It is a humongous database repository of instructions, commands and framework for the software, hardware and just about every other kind of ware that functions in Windows. You can also think of it as the Windows brain, and fooling with it is about as welcome as brain surgery self-taught.

Unfortunately and as unwelcome as it may be, the Registry does require some basic manipulation by users from time to time. Add or remove software or change the locations of its components, make routine changes in Windows, and a whole host of other functions in everyday computer usage result in changes in the Registry. In time it can easily become bogged down with errors that can dramatically hinder the normal or optimal functioning of your computer. It's little wonder why keeping the registry clean and error free is so important, yet so avoided. It's even less wonder why the average computer user either shuns necessary Registry housekeeping altogether or winds up employing tools that do considerably more harm than good.

A clean, error-free Registry is vital in keeping your computer working properly, but finding and fixing Registry errors indeed poses a dilemma. There is no shortage of utilities that promise to make your computer function like new by taking out your Registry garbage. Unfortunately, you are most often better off living with an error-laden Registry than one whose key functions have been impaired by incompetent fixers.

With all these caveats in mind, I spent considerable effort, investigation and experimentation years ago to find the Registry cleaning utility that would do an honest, safe and effective job. Through several versions of Windows and most recently with Windows 7, I have been using Registry First Aid (RFA). It is a well-known, popular, easy to use and remarkably competent Registry utility that will find, fix, and prevent Registry errors and malfunctions safely and effectively. It is the only one I trust to do the job! Here's what it will do:

1. RFA will search the Registry for errors. Your first search

will undoubtedly come up with an amazing number of errors. It will present a color coded list of them. Those in green can be safely eliminated or fixed. For each error, you will be provided with a reason for its problem and an indication of what is needed to either delete or fix it. If, for example, a software reference is not valid because it is sitting in the wrong place, RFA will discover where it rightfully belongs and offers to put it there. If no fix is possible, it offers to delete it.

Those errors that require caution in fixing are listed in yellow, along with reasons and recommendations. The choice will be yours. Those listed in red are also explained and high caution warned.

In any event, each and every error will be explained, recommendation made, and the choice for action will be up to you. No changes are automatic. You are in complete control!

2. Registry backup and restore. Before making any changes, you might want to back up your current Registry configuration. RFA stores the backup and you can at any later time restore the Registry to exactly the way it was before you modified it. Great safety feature!

3. Registry search. If you need to find anything in the Registry, RFA will do a lightning fast keyword search for you. A great feature in finding and eliminating references to software you have gotten rid of.

4. Registry management. Set up the Registry in your own parameters to function according to your preferences.

5. Defragment and compress the Registry.

While most Registry utilities offer to make your computer work faster and better by cleaning the Registry, they offer no information as to what they or doing or why. It's a blind faith and trust scenario. On the other hand, RFA bends over backwards in every step along the way to keep you safe and informed.

RFA is the recipient of numerous awards as the safest and most effective Registry cleaner available. They are well deserved. It has long ago solved the Registry cleaning dilemma for me. It is compatible with all current versions of Windows including XP, Vista and Windows 7. RFA is published by and available from Rose City Software (rosecitysoftware.com) for $27.95

Cell Phone Lingo

By Wil Wakely, President, Seniors Computer Group, CA
March 2011 issue, Bits and Bytes,
www.SCGsd.org, wilw(at)adnc.com

When it's time to buy or upgrade to a new cell phone, are you as confused as I am with all the fancy terms and acronyms in the sales pitch? They make my head spin. Some of the terms you will encounter refer to the technology generation of the phone, as in G0 to G5. About every 10 years the next larger G (generation) number appears denoting a major improvement in cell phone technology. Each generation improves the speed, security, power usage, range and reliability of cell phones. G0 refers to the original mobile telephone, a large unit stored in the car trunk with a hand-set between the driver and passenger seat. Remember those? Essentially it was a souped-up shortwave radio. These first made the scene via Motorola and Bell Telephone in the 50's.

Next came G1 using GMS tech (see below) which also was analog, first introduced in Japan in 1979 and later in the USA in 1983. In 1992, G2 was a major improvement using digital technology vs. analog that was used in G1. So what's the difference? Analog is a continuous smooth signal like whistling a tune. Digital rapidly samples the song and converts each small time segment into a series of ones and zeros, or digits. Through some clever complex calculations, these digits are converted back to the original sound tone and volume. The advantages of digital are that the data can be compressed and encoded for security and no information is lost as long as the I/0 signal can be detected, even from a lot of accompanying noise. In 2001, 3G was introduced using a new technology called CDMA (code division multiple access) developed by our local Qualcomm company. This is a very complex encoding that allows many more users on the same channel at the same time.

G3 is probably the most common system in use today.

G4 arrived in 2006 and allows 1 Gbt/s (one gigabit per second) downloads from a fixed location or 100 mbt/s (megabits per second) from a moving vehicle. These high speeds allow streaming high-definition video (HD movies) on your cell phone. Also, connections to the Internet are faster and better.

G5 is still in the lab and promises even more features, but may not arrive before 2020.

The cell phone field is rampant with 3, 4, and 5 letter acronyms. Here are a few that a salesman may try to impress you with:

GMS (global mobile system): still widely used in older phones.

TDMA (time domain multiple access): sharing the airwave in small time slots.

FDMA (frequency domain multiple access): sharing the airwave in different frequencies.

CDMA (see above).

An analogy to the problem of multiple access is a room (channel) in which people wish to talk to each other simultaneously. To avoid confusion, people could take turns speaking (time division), speak at different pitches (frequency division), or speak in different languages (code division). Other terms you may encounter are LTE (long term evolution),

OTDMA (orthogonal TDMA) and WiMax (similar to WiFi).

These are fancy names for some of the latest improvements in the field. So the best strategy for buying a new cell phone is to read the reviews and then find a salesman you can trust. Some of the above information may help you understand his pitch and also impress him with your knowledge.

Help Lines

HARDWAREHELP	Advisor No.
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	Advisor No.
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)
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 11 Jul 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

TOG BOARD MEMBERS

TOG Web Site: http://www.toggle.org

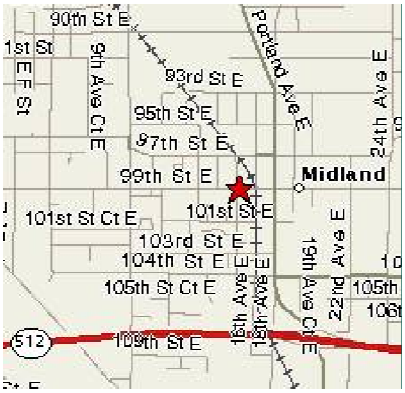
Deadline: 15th of this month to appear in next months' issue, if room

Corporate Sponsors:

Raymond Mills & Associates
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!



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

None announced at press time but judging from past meetings you can be assure that there will be lively discussion about topics od interest to the attendees.