

TOGGLE

THE MICROCOMPUTER TURN (ON)

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Library News

- None Reported at press time.

UPDATE

Revamping the Renewal Date

Last month's announcement of all members renewal date being changed to January first has caused some consternation in some members minds. Some members have renewed for more than one year and it was not clear how their dues would be handled since the announcement was geared to those who renewed for one year only.

Be assured that if you have renewed for more than one year in advance your multiyear payment will be honored.

Year End Party

The December meeting will include the latest news and developments in the computing world as it affects our members. It also will include traditional goodies brought by our members to celebrate the Christmas season.



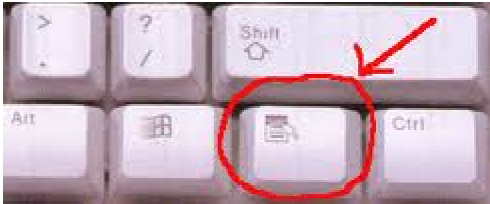
BEGINNERS NOTES & TIPS

Mouseless Right Click

Big Bear Computer Club Bearly Bytes November, 2011

Many people would like to use the right-click menus but either hate the mouse, or don't have one. This tip is for those of you who love to use the keyboard, but still want to complete the same tasks the mouse right clicks cover.

On your keyboard between Alt and Windows or Ctrl keys is the Menu Key. Not there? Search for the key at the top of the keyboard. It looks like a lined menu. Press this menu key and you've replaced the rightclick. Use the arrow keys to navigate through the pop-up menus and the Enter key to select your choices. If you hit this key accidentally or just need to get out of the pop up menu, just hit the Esc key.



COMMUNICATIONS NOTES & TIPS

Downloading Deceptions

Written by Sandy Berger

Downloading programs from the Internet can be both fun and rewarding. There are, however, a few things that you have to be aware of when you grab any program from the Internet.

First, you should be sure that the program is from a reputable source. It may come from a recommendation from a friend, relative, or other trusted source. You may be following a recommendation from a columnist, like me, or a blogger who you know and trust. If you are at all unsure of the reliability of the program, you should research it thoroughly on the Internet before you download the program.

Once you have decided that the program you want is safe, there is one big "gotcha" that you should be aware of. Many programs that are themselves very safe and useful, make deals with other companies to promote their products in their download process. These offers are often integrated with the download so that unless you make changes during the download and install process, you will also get the add-on products, whether you want them or not.

These products are often toolbars like the Yahoo! Toolbar, the Ask Toolbar, and the Bing Toolbar. These are innocuous toolbars that allow you an easy way to use the Yahoo!, Ask, or Bing search engines from inside your browser. They can be useful or they can be aggravating, depending on your viewpoint.

If you have even looked up at the top of the screen while you browse the Web and wondered where all those new strips of icons came from, you have probably inadvertently downloaded them when you downloaded other programs.

Here's how it works. You download the new program. Then you install it. The installation consists of several screens. You press Next to get past each screen. At the end, you press Finish.

If you didn't read each screen, you may have just agreed to install these extra programs without even knowing it. In some cases, you have also agreed to let the program change your home screen (the one you see when you start your Web browser.)

Here's how it works. One of the installation screens will have one or more check boxes. Next to the checkboxes are the instructions. They read something like: "Install the Yahoo Toolbar" and/or "Make Yahoo my homepage". Here's the rub. The checkboxes are pre-filled with a checkmark indicating that you are choosing to let the program perform these tasks. If you don't want the program to install these extras, you have to click in each box to remove the checkmark and let the program know that you don't want to install these extra programs.

These little add-on programs often come along with free programs as the manufacturer is trying to get a little income from the piggy-back program's developer. Although not necessarily unethical, this is a bit of trickery on the part of the program developer. Yet everyone seems to be doing it, including well-known, reputable manufacturers. For instance Java, a program that you need to display Web pages properly is from a very stable company called Sun Microsystems. Yet when you download Java you will encounter pre-checked boxes to install the Yahoo! Toolbar.

Adobe, another reputable company, offers Adobe Reader, a program for displaying documents in the popular PDF format. They do something similar. When you go to their website to download the Adobe Reader program, there is a pre-checked box next to the download button that says, "Yes, install McAfee Security Scan Plus", a program that is supposed to make your computer more secure.

Although none of these programs contains a virus and none is particularly bad, the fact is that most of them start automatically when you start your computer or your Web browser. Feel free to let the programs install one or two if you would like to try them. Just remember that If you accumulate too many of them, they will slow down your computer and/or clutter your screen with unnecessary toolbars.

With that in mind, you should always read the download and installation pages when you install any program. Uncheck the boxes if you don't want to install the extra programs. In the words of the famous Sargent Esterhaus in Hill Street Blues, "Hey, let's be careful out there!"

Turn Volume Down Quickly

Sandy Berger

If you like to listen to music while you are working on the computer or browsing the Web, this free program is for you. It lets you control the volume with your mouse. Get a phone call or a summons for attention from your spouse? You can quickly and easily turn down the volume.

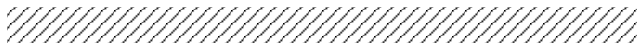
Volumouse (<http://www.nirsoft.net/utills/volumouse.html>) is a small program that lets you control the volume of your computer with your mouse. It turns your mouse's click wheel into a volume dial. Just hold down the Alt key and move the mouse wheel to increase or decrease the volume. It is quick and easy. No window to open. No menu to scroll through.

You can also set up other keys to activate Volumouse, if you like. And you can use it to control the volume when you are using Windows Media Player.

System Requirements

Windows operating system: Windows 98, Windows ME, Windows NT, Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Server 2003, or Windows Vista. (Windows 95 is not supported), Wheel mouse, Sound card.

Check for other neat stuff at <http://www.nirsoft.net/>



The Overlooked Risks of Staying Logged In

by Leo Notenboom Ask Leo March 20, 2011
<http://articlesbyleo.com/>

Have you ever checked your e-mail on a friend's computer, public computer, or even display model at the store, only to wonder later if that was a wise move? Is your information safe, or can someone use cookies to retrieve your log in information and access your account?

It depends on what webmail service you're using. But regardless, you may very well be at risk with any account that requires you to login.

There are three important questions that apply here:

- What does the website store in a cookie?
- How long does the website keep you logged in?
- Is the browser configured to remember passwords?

Each website determines what is and is not saved in cookies. It is possible for a site to use a cookie to save a password; however, this is poor security as anyone with access to the machine could access your account. Most commercial systems don't use this approach.

A password may be encrypted and only make sense to the service in question, but not decipherable to the user. Or, the cookie may use information to access the account that is not related to your password, but related to data contained in the service's computer. Either way, it is unlikely a stranger can access your password through cookies saved on the computer.

The greater risk comes from the way most sites allow you to stay logged in for a while so that you don't have to re-enter your information each time you click through different pages on the site or temporarily browse to another site. Some servers, such as banks, keep that length of time short, others keep it fairly long. The result is the same during that time anyone can walk up to the computer and access your account.

And the solution is very simple: always remember to sign out of your account so no one else can use it.

Finally, make sure you don't allow the browser to remember your password - typically an option you check when you sign in, or an optional feature of the browser or both. If you allow either, anyone with access to the machine can use a utility program to recover your password.

If you choose to log into your account on a public computer, or even that of a friend, understand you are taking a risk and extra caution is necessary. Make sure to log off completely when you are done, and never allow the browser to save your password.

WORD PROCESSING NOTES & TIPS

Microsoft vs. OpenOffice.org Office Suite Standoff

by Nancy DeMarte (ndemarte (at) Verizon.net), Sarasota
PCUG, Inc., <http://www.spcug.org>
as seen in ACGNJ News November 2011

An office suite is a software product that includes a group of programs which perform typical office functions; that is, creating and working with documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and databases. Some suites include specialized programs like email or calendars. There are many office suites available, such as Corel's WordPerfect Office, Lotus Symphony Suite by IBM, and ThinkFree3. Among the best known suites are Microsoft Office and OpenOffice.org.

My original intention this month was just to compare features and compatibility between Microsoft Office and OpenOffice.org. I installed OpenOffice.org on my computer and have been testing it against my familiar MS Office for several months. In researching the history of the two suites, however, I stumbled across a story that I felt needed to be part of this article. Let's start with that.

History

Microsoft introduced its Office suite in 1992 with Office 3.0. It included Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Mail (later to become Outlook). Since that time, the suite has expanded to MS Office 2007, which comes in eight versions that include from 3 to 13 programs and runs on both Windows and Mac platforms. MS Office 2010, its newest suite, has reduced the versions to three, including 4 - 7 programs. Because it is a commercial product with a profit goal, MS Office is expensive, although non-profits can get substantial discounts through websites like TechSoup, and businesses can get deals on volume licensing. Office 2007 and 2010 are full-featured suites with frequent updates and great customer support and security.

OpenOffice.org has a different kind of history. The origins of OpenOffice.org (OOo) began in Germany in the mid-1980's with a suite called Star Office, created by the Star Division Company. It ran on several platforms, including Windows 98 and NT, Solaris, Java!, and Linux. In 1998, Star Office version 5.0 was offered free to users. The next year Sun Microsystems purchased Star Division, mainly to get free software for its thousands of employees and to compete with Microsoft.

In 2000 Sun first offered the source code for Star Office 5.2 free over the Internet. In October, the new OpenOffice.org website went online both as a free downloadable office suite product and a collaborative project. Anyone could participate in improving the suite by submitting ideas or code. OpenOffice.org immediately became popular; the open philosophy was embraced by software developers around the world. By 2005, the free suite had reached 20 million downloads and over 150,000 registered members. It was a David and Goliath situation: big corporation versus the little guys.

All this time Sun had also continued to market its commercial office suite, Star Office, for a nominal cost to businesses, but free to educators. In January 2010, the large company Oracle bought Sun Microsystems and acquired the OpenOffice.org brand. Before that year was over, Oracle had stopped making Star Office free to educators and had introduced a new commercial product, Oracle Open Office (standard version for \$49.95 for 5 users or and enterprise version for \$90.00 for 25 users). Oracle is planning to offer its own office suite soon, an online product called Cloud Office, using Java FX and open document format, but not based on OOo code. It will be competing against the new rash of "cloud" office suites, such as Google Docs and Microsoft's Web Docs on SkyDrive.

As 2010 ends, the OpenOffice.org website remains intact; the suite is still a free download. But some Sun developers and many OpenOffice.org contributors are unhappy about changes that Oracle has made and worried that the company will soon remove "free" and "collaborative" from the OpenOffice.org vocabulary. Late in 2010 a new organization, this group formed the Document Foundation (TDF), to keep the open philosophy alive. They are working on a new office suite, LibreOffice,

which is now offered for free download in beta. Its final version, based on the OOo code, is scheduled to come out in early 2011 with sponsorship from Novell, Red Hat, and IBM. How all of this drama will impact OpenOffice.org as a product is unclear. But the little guys are again making a stand against another Goliath.

Feature Comparison

MS Office clearly beats OpenOffice.org in features and formatting options, especially those introduced with Office 2007, such as themes, Quick Parts, picture styles, Word Art, macros, and content controls. Office 2007 offers encryption, more templates and an extensive Help system. It also has the new ribbon interface, whereas OpenOffice.org uses menus like MS Office 2003.

OpenOffice.org includes the common programs found in an office suite plus some interesting features such as font effects, backgrounds, and sounds. It is a solid office suite, especially for home and small business. Its advantages over Microsoft Office are cost (It is free with an unlimited number of installations.), its ability to work with Linux and many other operating systems besides Windows, and its open philosophy. OOo runs a bit slower than MS Office, but takes up less disc space. Because it is a collaborative, it issues fewer updates and has fewer support options, but it also is less frequently attacked by malware. Even if you have never used an office suite, you can download this efficient little suite at <http://www.OpenOffice.org> and use it without much instruction.

Compatibility

As a Microsoft Office user, I was interested in how easy it would be to save files between the two suites since I have hundreds of Word documents and Excel spreadsheets. When I created a feature-filled Word 2007 document (.docx) and saved it as an OpenOffice.org file (.odt), it did save, but there were changes in margins and line spacing, and I lost all the Word 2007 features. When I created a document in OpenOffice.org (.odt), it would not save as a Word 2007 document (docx). I had to save it as a Word 2003 document (.doc), and then open it with Word 2007 in compatibility mode.

I concluded that it's best to choose one office suite and stick with it. In short, if you are a current MS Office 2007 or 2010 user, you will probably be happier staying where you are. If you are new to office suites, by all means give OpenOffice.org a try.

OPERATING SYSTEM NOTES & TIPS

Set Up Windows 7 and Protect against Viruses and Spyware Part of the Windows 7 All-in-One For Dummies Cheat Sheet

by Woody Leonhard

Here are some Windows 7 setup tasks to complete immediately to make your computer more effective to use and safeguard against viruses and spyware:

- ◆ Show filename extensions. Windows 7, by default, hides the filename extension that's the last (usually three) characters at the end of each file's name. This extension dictates how Windows treats the file and is a key piece of information that can help you identify and avoid viruses. So set up Windows 7 to show the filename extensions.
- ◆ Create a password reset disc. If you have a password on your Windows account, drop everything and go make a Password Reset Disc so that you can regain access if you forget your password.
- ◆ Protect your PC from scumware and spyware. Use PC Safeguard to clean up after computer users who install smiley face programs and other spy-versus-spy scumware.
- ◆ Clear out any messages in the Action Center. Click the flag in the Windows 7 notification area, next to the clock. Then choose Open Action Center from the resulting menu. The Action Center lists the tasks that Windows 7 wants you to take care of, and you can do so one by one.
- ◆ Turn off Automatic Updates. Let Windows 7 tell you when updates are available, but don't download or install them until you're good and ready.
- ◆ Get the rest of what you paid for Windows Live Essentials. Microsoft tore three major applications from Windows 7 and put them on the Internet; you have to download and install them. If you use instant messaging, download Windows Live Messenger. If you want to put mail on your PC and you didn't buy Outlook, download Windows Live Mail. Windows Live Photo Gallery has a few features that make it better than Google Picasa, but if you already know Picasa, stick with it.

GENERAL INTEREST

Debunking Some Common Myths

Author: Mindi McDowell

There are some common myths that may influence your online security practices. Knowing the truth will allow you to make better decisions about how to protect yourself.

How are these myths established?

There is no one cause for these myths. They may have been formed because of a lack of information, an assumption, knowledge of a specific case that was then generalized, or some other source. As with any myth, they are passed from one individual to another, usually because they seem legitimate enough to be true.

Why is it important to know the truth?

While believing these myths may not present a direct threat, they may cause you to be more lax about your security habits. If you are not diligent about protecting yourself, you may be more likely to become a victim of an attack.

What are some common myths, and what is the truth behind them?

- ◆ Myth: Anti-virus software and firewalls are 100% effective.

Truth: Anti-virus software and firewalls are important elements to protecting your information (see Understanding Anti-Virus Software and Understanding Firewalls for more information). However, neither of these elements are guaranteed to protect you from an attack. Combining these technologies with good security habits is the best way to reduce your risk.

- ◆ Myth: Once software is installed on your computer, you do not have to worry about it anymore.

Truth: Vendors may release updated versions of software to address problems or fix vulnerabilities (see Understanding Patches for more information). You should install the updates as soon as possible; some software even offers the option to obtain updates automatically. Making sure that you have the latest virus definitions for your anti-virus software is especially important.

- ◆ Myth: There is nothing important on your machine, so you do not need to protect it.

Truth: Your opinion about what is important may differ from an attacker's opinion. If you have personal or financial data on your computer, attackers may be able to collect it and use it for their own financial gain. Even if you do not store that kind

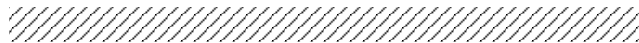
of information on your computer, an attacker who can gain control of your computer may be able to use it in attacks against other people (see Understanding Denial-of-Service Attacks and Understanding Hidden Threats: Rootkits and Botnets for more information).

♦ Myth: Attackers only target people with money.

Truth: Anyone can become a victim of identity theft. Attackers look for the biggest reward for the least amount of effort, so they typically target databases that store information about many people. If your information happens to be in the database, it could be collected and used for malicious purposes. It is important to pay attention to your credit information so that you can minimize any potential damage (see Preventing and Responding to Identity Theft for more information).

♦ Myth: When computers slow down, it means that they are old and should be replaced.

Truth: It is possible that running newer or larger software programs on an older computer could lead to slow performance, but you may just need to replace or upgrade a particular component (memory, operating system, CD or DVD drive, etc.). Another possibility is that there are other processes or programs running in the background. If your computer has suddenly become slower, it may be compromised by malware or spyware, or you may be experiencing a denial-of-service attack (see Recognizing and Avoiding Spyware and Understanding Denial-of-Service Attacks for more information).



Wax2.0 VideoEditor

By Ann Delong

Durham Personal Computer Users' Club Newsletter

A few weeks ago I decided to create a video to accompany a piece of music. I had never used a video editor before. I wanted to use a technique called Chroma Key which allows the replacement of one background with another (as seen on TV when the weatherman walks in front of the satellite display).

Since I knew nothing about how to do this, I started by looking for advice on the Internet. I found a number of how-to videos on YouTube, and most seemed to recommend a program called WAX, which is freely available for download.

After installing WAX 2.0, I was impressed at how easy it was to get started. WAX allows many video, audio and special effect tracks to run simultaneously. The feature that made it particularly suitable for my purpose was its ability to crop each section of video, then move and overlap the cropped sections to form one video after rendering.

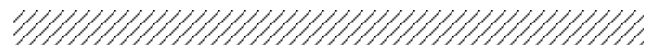
After buying some turquoise fabric to use for my removable background, I recorded six pieces of video, being careful not to move the camera between takes. (Thanks, Dan, for handling the stopping and starting of the video and sound recorders!) I then used a combination of split-screen and chroma key to make my video. It was fairly easy to use, considering that I hadn't used a video editor before. The free advice on YouTube helped!

WAX 2.0 has a full range of special effects, and it allows the user a choice of CODECs when rendering the final video.

If you would like to see the results of my efforts, you can find my video on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDTAMWsUDoA>

USB Cell Drive

The number of small electronic devices per household has multiplied to the point that keeping track of connectors, adapters and chargers is problematic. The Cell Drive (a.k.a. the Swiss Army knife of the geek world) comes to the rescue. This small device contains a rechargeable lithium polymer battery, flash drive storage, synchronisation capabilities, and the ability to do these tasks while recharging itself from the wall, from a computer USB charge port, or a car charger. The 4GB model is \$50 - the 8GB is \$60. <http://www.usbcelldrive.com/>



Free Online College Courses

www.academicearth.org

Maybe you would love to take an educational course, whether in finance, science or literature. However, you don't want to deal with the homework, the commute or navigate school bureaucracy.

That's where the Internet saves the day with sites like Academic Earth. It offers hundreds of course videos from colleges and universities around the world. The schools include MIT, Yale, Stanford and other prestigious institutions.

You can view entire courses in virtually any subject. There are also playlists that mix and match lectures to cover specific topics. Want to know more about philosophy, math, astronomy, art or entrepreneurship? What about how rainbows, particle accelerators or musical instruments work? All these topics and more are available.

This site is a great find for anyone who loves learning new things. Students can use videos for reports with the site's citation function. It's also good resource for job hunters. Updating knowledge in your field and being able to demonstrate that you care about continuing education can give you an edge in the job market.

Nuke Personal Files

By Kim Komando <http://komando.com>

Dumping an old PC is a more serious decision than you may think. Your personal files could fall into the wrong hands?

Before you give up your computer, clean the hard drive. Deleting files using the Recycle Bin is not good enough. Deleted data can be recovered by inexpensive programs available online.

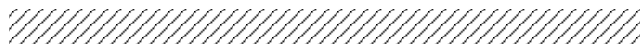
There may also be personal documents or photos you've forgotten. Who could recall every detail of a computer that's been around four or five years?

Both of these issues can be resolved by a program called DBAN (Darik's Boot and Nuke). DBAN can delete and overwrite your files numerous times, preventing recovery. It cleans the entire hard drive, so nothing is left to forgetfulness.

On computers with floppy drives, DBAN is easy. Start the program, put a floppy disk into the drive and click the Install button. After DBAN saves to the disk, restart the computer to boot from the floppy.

Many modern computers lack a floppy drive. Fortunately, DBAN can be saved to a USB flash drive or burned to CD. However, most computers don't readily boot from CD or flash drives. My tip on booting from a USB drive can help you set this up.

DBAN securely wipes out the entire hard drive. When it's finished, the computer won't even have Windows. This is perfect for discarding or recycling.



How to Backup Securely

By Mark Tiongco www.geeks.com

Hartford User Group Exchange November, 2011

This Tech Tip addresses some frequently asked questions about how to safeguard your computer data on a personal and business level. It assumes that you DO NOT have gigabytes of music and movies that require extensive security measures to protect.

1.) How should I begin to secure important data on my desktop computer or laptop?

First, it makes sense to designate 1 or 2 specific folders on your computer as the main folder for confidential file back-ups for several reasons. If you have to do a quick back-up, all you do is copy that folder to an external drive for an instant back-up.

Second, It provides a centralized location for all important data. Instead of having to hunt down the menu, sub-menu, sub-submenu of where you normally download company financial spreadsheets, you can set your browser and programs (such as Quickbooks, etc.) to save/download all important files to this folder.

Third, let's say you only save ALL important files on a flash drive/external hard drive. If your notebook gets lost/stolen, the thieves only have the programs and not the actual confidential files which are on the cheap flash drive.

2.) Great, now how do I actually back-up my designated BACK UP folder(s)?

Here's where it gets tricky. You have several back-up options such as:

A.) Cloud - Services such as Carbonite and Mozy offer lowpriced back-up solutions. You basically upload all your confidential files to their cloud servers and are able to access them anywhere in the world where there is Internet access. The main issue is that, from a business security perspective, you have no idea where your data is stored. If, for example, it's stored in a server farm in China which gets hacked, then you're in trouble.

B.) External Hard Drives - These nifty devices come in portable 2.5" and larger 3.5" flavors and offer more than generous dumping grounds for all things important. Once you plug it in, your OS recognizes it and pops you up with a folder showing it as a (giant) external drive with a letter (i.e. G:) Some even feature OTB (One Touch Backup) so you press one button and it backs up either your entire system or certain portions of it. Some external hard drives offer plug-in encryption that prevents unauthorized access. The issue with this solution is that you have to lug it around, which means it has a chance of getting lost/stolen and the formality of performing a back-up might become time-consuming to some.

C.) Flash Drive - These little drives are more nimble, have zero moving parts and are highly portable. Unfortunately, this is also its Achilles' Heel as its relatively small size makes it prone to becoming misplaced or stolen. Also it does not have the capacity of a larger external drive. The good news is that some flash drives have built-in encryption which can be useful if it lands in the wrong hands.

D.) Home/Office Network Attached Storage Drive - Also called NAS, this is an excellent solution for comprehensive back-up protection as these hard drives function as dumping grounds for an entire home or office network. It provides a centralized location for files, folders and documents which any connected computer can access and come in large drive sizes. However, security precautions should be utilized if the NAS has built-in measures as an unsecured NAS may be

prone to prying eyes. For example, a NAS without security protocols activated while connected to a home Wi-Fi network is prone to being breached. Because of this, it's crucial to configure the NAS security as well as the router/network security for optimal protection.

E.) Backing up to CD/DVD/Blu-Ray - Optical media back-up is actually a very cost-effective solution because CDs and DVDs are very cheap nowadays. Furthermore, if you're looking to close the books for a certain month on your business, burning to a CD-R or DVD+R sets the data in stone so it can't be manipulated on the disc. The problem is that if you have lots of data to back-up, the formality of using several CD-R or DVD-R discs to save might also become time consuming. In addition, you would have to make sure said back-up discs are placed in a safe place where the chance of it getting stolen is minimized.

3.) Which back-up method should I pick?

While the above solutions offer many ways to back up your confidential data, the best way to minimize a data breach/loss is to follow a combination of multiple backup solutions and proactive behavior. For example, it would be a good idea to store important sensitive data on your flash drive and encrypting it with TRUE Crypt while also saving duplicate file copies on your home NAS drive via secure VPN connection. If your flash drive is lost/stolen, True Crypt prevents the drive from being used without proper credentials and you can still access the very same duplicate files on your NAS server. Regarding proactive behavior, you should be mindful of back-ups so you don't lose something you wish you saved 2 weeks ago.

There are also programs out there that can help secure data such as:

- Folder Lock - Locks and can hide any folder you wish from prying eyes.
- True Crypt - secures drives with extensive hardware encryption.
- Acronis Drive Cleaner - Completely erases all drive data with several methods (DoD, Gutmann method, etc.) - works great if you're planning to get rid of old computer hardware.

Remember, it's all about being proactive and being mindful of what back-up security solutions to use for your personal or business needs!

When to Backup Your Hard Drive

By Gene Barlow User Group Relations Copyrighted
November 2011

This past week, my computer failed and I was left without a working computer. Yes, computer failures happen even to the experts! Fortunately, I practice what I preach and had several good backups to use to rebuild my computer system. In fact, while rebuilding my computer system, I made additional backups to protect me as I worked through this problem. Everything is working perfectly now thanks to my backups.

This experience got me thinking. As a backup expert, I know when to do different types of back-ups. I was concerned that many of my customers and friends that don't have this knowledge may not know what to do in backing up their computer system. So, I thought I would share some of my experience in this area with you this month.

As a beginning, every user needs to do a basic backup process that I describe in my tutorials and documents (<http://www.ugr.com/nl0804.html>). This is a full image backup of your entire main hard drive done each week with the images stored on an external hard drive. If you do no more than this, you will be well protected. However, there are other important times when additional backups are needed. Let me explain.

The following is a list of important times to do additional backups of your computer system:

- 1- When you first buy a new computer is an ideal time to immediately back it up before you start to make changes to the computer. This will give you a basis to return to when your computer was clean and working.
- 2- When you decide to do backups, get a copy of Acronis True Image Home 2012 from us and an external hard drive from your local computer store. Follow the instructions in the Starter Guide I provide my customers, to do your first backup immediately. Don't wait months before you do your first backup. It may be too late then.
- 3- I recommend separating your important data files from your program files on the hard drive. Then, you can backup your important data files daily and your less critical program files weekly. This will give you much better protection of the files that are most important to you.
See a paper I wrote on this subject at <http://www.ugr.com/nl0608.html>
- 4- Always do a full hard drive backup immediately before you partition that hard drive and then do another full hard drive backup after the partitioning is completed. This will let you return to where you were before partitioning, if anything should go wrong with your revisions.
- 5- I recommend doing a full hard drive backup just before you install any major new software product on your computer. Software installations can mess up a computer when things go wrong. Having a full backup to use in those situations is a great protection.

6- Today, we see lots of Speed-Up and Clean-Up utilities on the market. These promise great improvements of your systems. However, you must trust these programs to work correctly. Unfortunately, they may over clean your computer and important files and function may be lost. Always do a full backup before using these types of utilities.

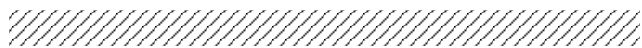
7- From time to time, we must take our computers into the experts to be fixed. Often, the computer will be returned to you with all of your programs and important data files removed from the hard drive. Sure your computer works now, but you are missing many important things from your hard drive. Make sure you always do a full hard drive backup before leaving your computer at the repair shop.

These are just a few of the many important times to do a backup of your main hard drive. Set up your backup program to run automatically on a regular basis, but don't forget to do extra backups when you are faced with any of these special situations.

This is one of a series of technical articles that I distribute to those that have sub-scribed to this newsletter.

You can subscribe at <http://www.ugr.com/NewsletterRegistration.html>.

Watch for them and learn more about your computer and its hard drive. If you do not want to receive these newsletters, simply reply and ask to have your name re-moved from the list and I will do so immediately. User group newsletter editors may print this article in their monthly newsletter as long as the article (between the two horizontal lines) is printed in its entirety and not cut or edited. Please send me a copy of the newsletter containing the article so that I can see what groups are running the articles.



Why Partition Your Hard Drive

By Gene Barlow User Group Relations Copyrighted
December 2011

I am sure that most of you have heard of partitions on your hard drive, but may not be totally aware of what they are or why you would want to use partitions on your hard drive. A partition is simply a portion of your hard drive that has been specially prepared with a File System so that it can store your program and data files on the drive. Each partition you create on your hard drive is given a drive letter to make it easier to find and retrieve the files later. You can have a single partition on a hard drive or there can be many partitions on the drive. Most users have a single c: partition on their hard drive and perhaps one or two other hidden partitions put there by the computer manufacturer.

Adding additional partitions to your hard drive is very easy to do with the right tools. The purpose of this article is to suggest several reasons why you may want to add additional partitions to your hard drive and to introduce you to a software tool that will make doing this very easy to do.

Protecting your Important Data Files

The number one reason that your hard drive crashes is because the Windows operating system becomes corrupt and brings down your entire c: partition. Viruses also attack your c: drive. When this happens, other files in your c: partition may be lost. However, files in other partitions on your hard drive will probably be untouched by the crash.

For this reason alone, the c: partition is the most risky partition on your hard drive and the one most likely to crash. If you set up other partitions on your hard drive and keep your important data and photo files in these other partitions and not in the c: partition, these files will probably be safe when your c: drive crashes.

Organize your Hard Drive with Partitions

Computers today come with very large terabyte main hard drives. To leave such a large hard drive with only one c: partition does not make much sense. If your hard drive is very large, you should divide it up into 3 or 4 smaller partitions and then store different types of files in different partitions.

I suggest you use your c: partition just for the Windows operating system and all of your application programs installed on your computer. Then you should have another partition just for your important data files, for example your spreadsheets, your written documents, your financial records, your genealogy database, and other important data files. Finally, I would suggest a separate Photo partition to contain all of your digital photographs, your video clips, and your scanned pictures. By organizing your large hard drive this way, your computer will be much easier to use.

Gain Flexibility in Doing Backups

Finally, having more than one partition on your hard drive can give you added flexibility in doing your backups of your main hard drive. Today, doing full partition backups is vastly superior to the old file backup approach. Partition backups handle entire partitions including Windows and your application programs as well as your important data files. So, running a good partition backup utility like Acronis True Image Home 2012 is the best way to do backups today.

If you carefully separate your files into different partitions, then you could backup the different partitions on a different schedule. For example, I would backup my Program Partition (c:) only once or twice a month. However, my important Data Partition, I would back up daily or at least every 2-3 days. My Photo Partition, I would only back it up when I have actively saved new photos to it. So, having separate partitions for these types of files lets you back them up on a schedule that is important to each type of file.

Partitioning made easy with Acronis Disk Director from Gene Barlow's Website www.ugr.com/DiskDirector.html

Basic DVD Recording

By Bob Elgines, Colorado River Computer Club, Arizona

DVDs are like CDs, but with greater capacity; you can record sound, video, or data. The latest CDs allow 700MB of data, or 80 minutes of sound or video (mpeg1 format) whereas the DVDs allow 4.7 GB or 120 minutes of sound or video (mpeg2 format). Then you have Double Layer DVDs which allow 9.6 GB or approximately 3.7 hours of video. As we probe into the basics you will find approximately 10% of the room on your disk is used by Titles, Menus, and Directories.

First, what do we need to accomplish the recording of data, and sound: A computer with a minimum of 1 GHz, 512 MB of RAM, 40 GB hard drive, CDR optical drive, video with 32 MB RAM for 1024 x 768 screen mode, and recording software such as "NERO" by Ahead Software.

Second, we need all the above plus the items below for Video:

A DVDR optical drive, an input device such as ADS' Instant DVD (USB input) or equivalent for recording from VHS tape, and a VCR. A fire wire input card can be used if you are recording from a digital camcorder (DV).

To record data and sound on DVDs is very similar to CDs, but video is different only because we use a different format. A CD may be used with this format and would hold approximately 30 minutes of mpeg2 (MP2) video. This CD would be called a "VCD" (Video CD) and would be played on a DVD Player.

There are several different video formats such as WMV, MPE, MPG, MP1, MP2, MP4, etc. MP1 (352x480) is fine for B&W video, but size and quality is too low for color. MP2 (720x480) is the most common format used at this time for doing video DVDs. MP2 can be recorded in low (3382Kbits per sec), medium (5073Kbits per sec), and high (9716Kbits per sec) quality.

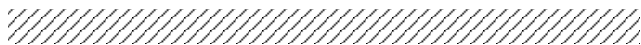
Before you start recording video, you may want to shut down all the programs running in the background to gain the maximum amount of System Resources in order to acquire the greatest performance when recording video. You will use 4 to 20 GB of your hard drive for recording a two hour video depending on the format you use.

"NERO" (Version 6 or 7) is the cheapest way to go for software. This program will do just about everything for you (two hours plus on DVD, some editing, excellent recording). I also have used "My DVD v4 or 5" by Sonic (easy to use, some editing, up to 1.9 hours on a DVD), "My DVD v6" by Sonic (up to 3.5 hours on a DVD, but SONY players do not like the recording format), "Premiere Elements" by Adobe (easy editing is great, but recording is only good for one hour, jumps

around with movement and going more than one hour really destroys it by also getting choppy), "Movie Factory2" by Ulead (not bad, but very time consuming and hard to use, 1.9 hours on DVD) and "Studio Plus 10" by Pinnacle (very demanding, needs more memory and high quality video card; very hard to use!).

I am using an INTEL P4, 3.06 GHz, 512 MB RAM @ 800 MHz, GeForce FX5200 128 MB RAM video card, and a Digital Research model DDVD116DL (DVD Recorder with NERO software), an ADS Instant DVD VHS input device, which converts the analog video to digital Mpeg2 format via a USB port, and an IEEE firewire port for my DV Digital Camcorder.

There is no restriction against any nonprofit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.

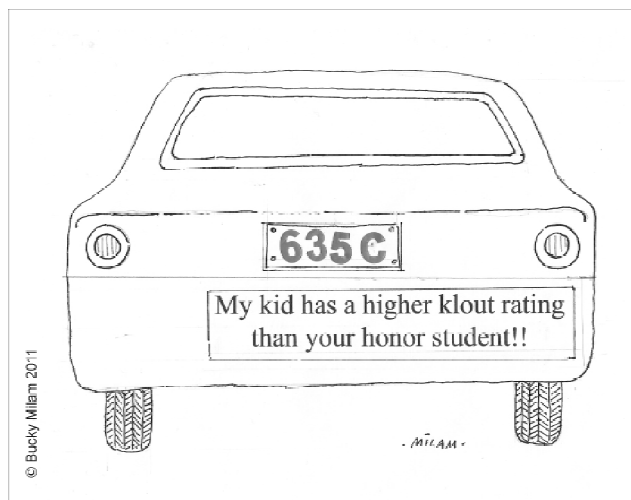


What is Klout?

Klout.com is a social media tool that measures your influence across the Web. For how Klout is calculated and how it measures your Twitter ranking, see below. The Klout Score gives a snapshot as to the popularity/influence of a user on Twitter.

The Klout Score measures influence based on your ability to drive action. Every time you create content or engage you influence others. The Klout Score uses data from social networks in order to measure:

- True Reach: How many people you influence
- Amplification: How much you influence them
- Network Impact: The influence of your network



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

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[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 12 Dec 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!



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.

Being the year end meeting in the holiday season come and participate not only in the computer gems that will be spread but also the seasonal goodies brought by our members. Shortbreads and sugarplums and who knows what else! Come! Enjoy!