

TOGGLE

THE MICROCOMPUTER TURN (ON)

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Notice!

Please check your expiration date on the mailing label of this issue of the TOGGLE newsletter. If there is an error or you have any concerns, please email the treasurer, Bob Henkel, at:

bobh@nventure.com.

UPDATE

Communications

In *AntiVirus Phone Apps* the author says: "The debate rages on about the necessity and effectiveness of antivirus software for smartphones, but their rapidly expanding use make attacks inevitable." The describes how to down load apps to take care of the problem.

In *Happy Legal Holidays* we are referred to a site which displays the message shown--all perfectly correct, of course.

In *Mapping Network Drives* Carl Tenning describes a problem he had with a normally straight-forward task of configuring his home network.

In *Own the Cloud With ownCloud* the author suggests that you are at the mercy of the quirks of the Cloud operator, if he has any. With ownCloud you control your own stuff. Read all about it if the Cloud is in your future.

In *Pocket-dialing: The great mystery* the author discusses that common problem from carrying your cell phone in a back pocket with the keyboard unlocked.

In *"ICE" and Your Cell Phone Can Help Save Your Life*" the author makes us aware that the American College of Emergency Physicians, has put together a website where patients can access health information, share stories, and get involved in advocacy efforts... One important section of this website talks about how "ICE" and Your Cell Phone Can Help Save Your

Life. The website states, "Emergency physicians are recommending that people with cellular phones add "ICE" entries into their cell phone address books. This stands for "In Case of Emergency" .

In *SKYPE Can Expose Your Location* the author warns that "If you are logged in to Skype, a prankster or thief or spy can effectively track where you are and in some circumstances, what you do and even what you download,"... "If a user's Skype application was running, the researchers could call inconspicuously and, in the process of placing the call, glean the user's Internet Protocol address. Read more in the article

Operating System

In *Better File Information with Windows Explorer* the author suggests looking at info saved with each file, but normally hidden, to design your own sorting scheme.

Hardware

In *A Tablet for the Holidays* Vinnie LaBash gives us an overview of available handhelds and tablets.

In *Computer Hardware Ports: What They Are and What They Do* the author reviews things you once knew but may have forgotten.

In *Disks - What would our computers be without them?* the author reviews the various forms of this ubiquitous hardware.

General Interest

In *Smart Computing Tips* some useful tips from the Smart Computing magazine are provided.

COMMUNICATIONS NOTES & TIPS

AntivirusPhone Apps

from WorldStart's Computer Tips
seen in Jan. 2012 Dataline, Tacoma Area PC User Group

I understand that there are several antivirus apps for Android phones. Can you recommend one ?

Thanks for the question, Ignatius. The debate rages on about the necessity and effectiveness of antivirus software for smartphones, but their rapidly expanding use make attacks inevitable. If there's one lesson to be learned from navigating cyberspace on computers, it's that; if infections can be created and spread to unsuspecting users, someone will do it.

Security was the first issue I addressed with my Android phone. And for that, I use the free version of *Lookout Security and Antivirus*, which can be downloaded from the Android Market by clicking here. <https://market.android.com/details?id=com.lookout> Or it can be accessed with the **QR Code** here.



QR Reader apps can be downloaded here <https://market.android.com/details?id=la.droid.qr&hl=en> for the **Android** and here <http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/neoreader/id284973754?mt=8> for the **iPhone**.

Once installed, the following screens offer and explain features. At the bottom of each screen, **Enable** is checked by default. If you'd rather not enable one of these features, uncheck the box and click the **Next** button.

At the bottom of the **Missing Device** screen, select **New** or **Existing** user, sign up (or sign in), and tap the **Start Lookout** button.

Lookout will then perform a spyware and malware scan. After that, when new apps are installed, they will also be scanned, with the results shown at the top of the screen.

To find a missing phone, using another device (computer, phone, etc.), go to the Lookout home page, <https://www.mylookout.com/> and click the **Log In** button.

Sign in, using your email address or mobile number.

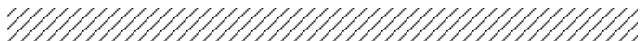
Then, either click the **Missing Device** image, or the **Missing Device** tab.

In my tests, the phone locator was able to quickly find the phone twice in two days, at two different locations. To activate the scream feature, click the **Scream** button.

This feature emits a loud screaming noise, designed to discourage thieves and alert people nearby, but it's just as likely to be used (by me at least) to find a misplaced phone. Many people keep the ring volume down on their phones, but the scream overrides the volume control, making it a more reliable way to find a phone, than by dialing the number. In addition to the scream, the phone screen will flash alternately between black and white (below).

To learn more about potential hazards, read the Lookout Mobile Threat Report. <https://www.mylookout.com/mobile-threat-report>

Lookout mobile security is also available for iPad and Android tablets.



Happy Legal Holidays

by Kevin Underhill, seen in January 2012 Newsletter of Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey

Groklaw (www.groklaw.net) has a feature called "LATEST NEWS PICKS". On December 25th, 2011, they quoted the following from Lowering the Bar (a website/blog by Kevin Underhill):

"Here's a holiday email that a reader received from another lawyer:

Wishing you all the best for the Holidays and a wonderful New Year!

This e-mail may contain confidential or privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately by return e-mail and delete this e-mail and all copies and attachments. Unless specifically stated otherwise, any tax advice contained in this communication (including any attachments) is not intended or written to be used, and cannot be used, for the purpose of (i) avoiding penalties under the Internal Revenue Code or (ii) promoting, marketing or recommending to another party any transaction or matter addressed herein.

Nothing gets you in the holiday spirit like a good disclaimer (the foregoing not to be taken as a guarantee of future results).

Happy holidays, including, but not limited to, Christmas".

The following link has been included for purposes of copyright acknowledgement:

<http://www.loweringthebar.net/2011/12/happy-legalholidays.html>

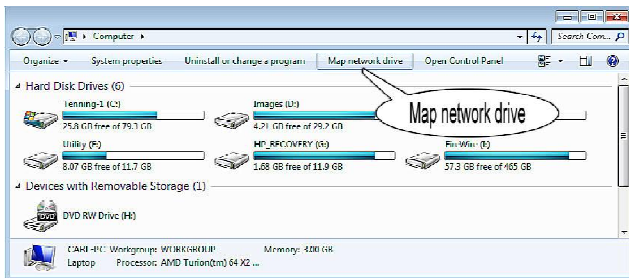
Mapping Network Drives

By Carl Tenning, Tacoma Open Group For Microcomputers

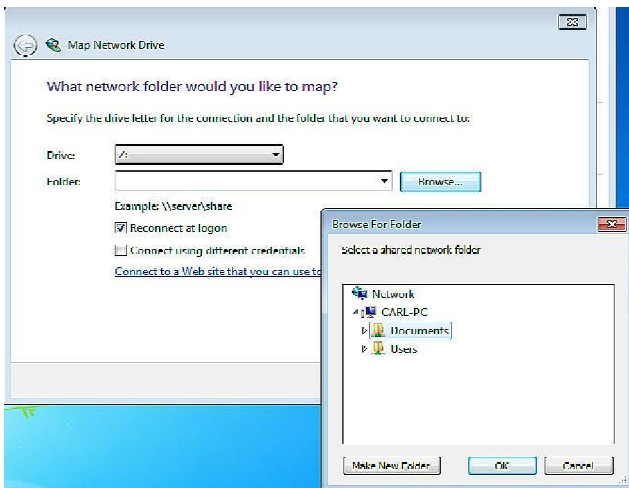
I have installed two 1-TB USB hard drives as network drives. While there are several network adaptor storage (NAS) devices available, they used to be pretty expensive. But I found a Hitachi SimpleNET adaptor for only \$49.95 at Fry's. It supports two USB hard drives and plugs into your router ethernet jack. There were no hardware drivers or software to install, just plug it in.

Usually it's pretty easy to get the network drives to show up on My Computer. Just select the "Map Network Drive." It worked perfectly on my Windows XP, Windows ME and Windows 98 computers. However, on a Windows 7 notebook I ran into a problem. When I first installed the network drives, Windows 7 had no problem finding them. However, when I use the notebook away from home, it could not find the network drives, but when I got home again, they usually reappeared. That is until one time at a computer club meeting I decided to delete the network hard drive icons, fully expecting them to reappear when I got home again. But they didn't! I could no longer access the network hard drives from the Windows 7 notebook. Now what?

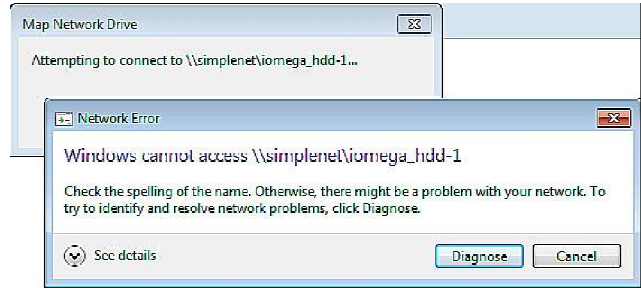
Clicking on the Windows 7 Computer icon has a tab to Map network drives. Normally this displays the location of the network drives and you simply make the connection. However, for some reason, it would no longer find the network drives on my Windows 7 notebook.



Clicking on "Map network drive" would not find the network drive.



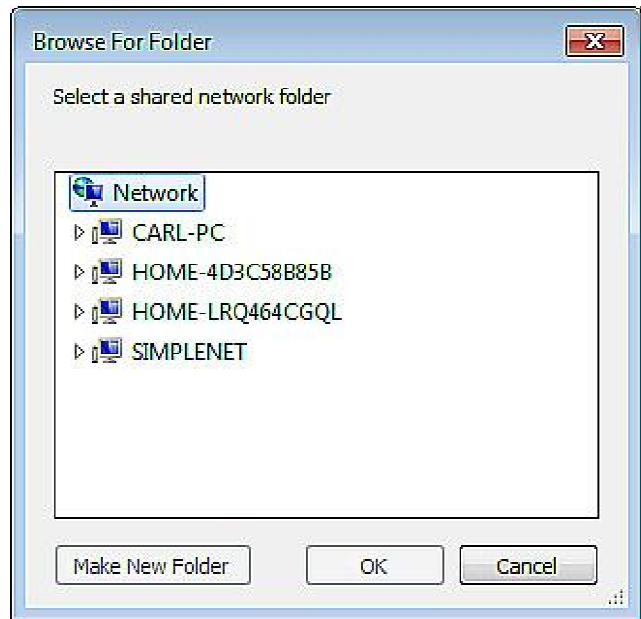
Manually typing in the network drive still didn't work:



The first thing that you usually do is a Google search for solutions to the problem. There were literally hundreds, if not thousands, of posting seeking solutions for this problem. I tried many of them, but nothing helped. Until I finally found the following link:

http://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/windows_7-networking/i-cant-see-my-network-storage-under-windows-7/0c367711-9104-4f13-aafe-5c32e350660c

The solution was to click Start and type services.msc in the search box. That brings up the window:



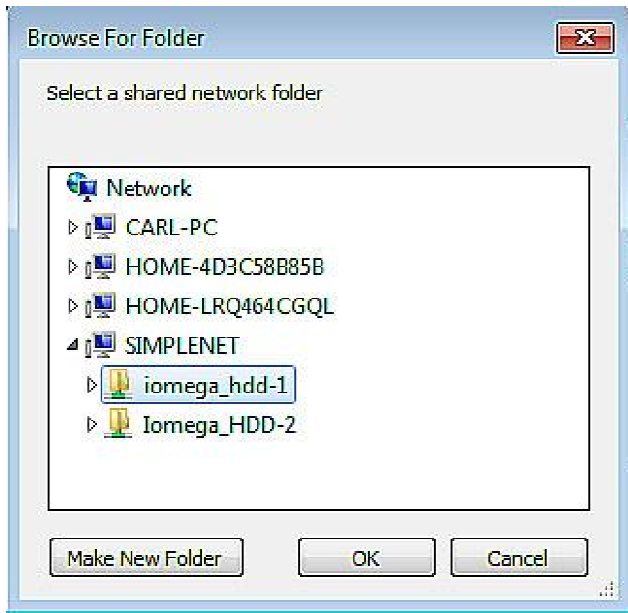
Next, search for the following services:

1. SSDPDiscovery - It was set to Manual. Change it to Automatic.
2. TCP/IP NetBIOS Helper - It was disabled. Set to automatic.
3. Computer Browser - It was set to manual. Set to automatic.
4. Server - Was already automatic. Leave as automatic.

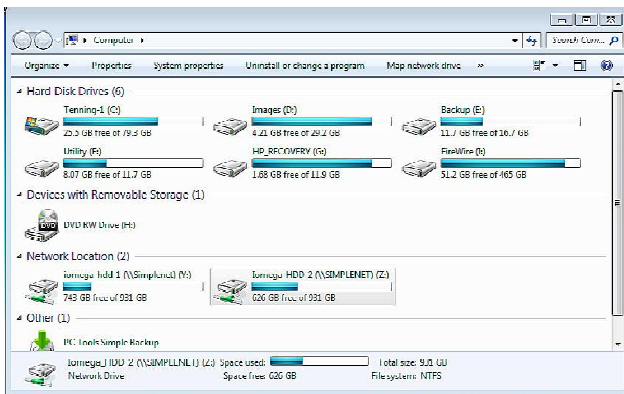
The procedure for setting the services to automatic was to search and highlight the service, then right-click on it. If the service is stopped, then Start the service. Next, select properties. In the Start-up type, select Automatic.

After that, restarting the computer and that did it! Now I get

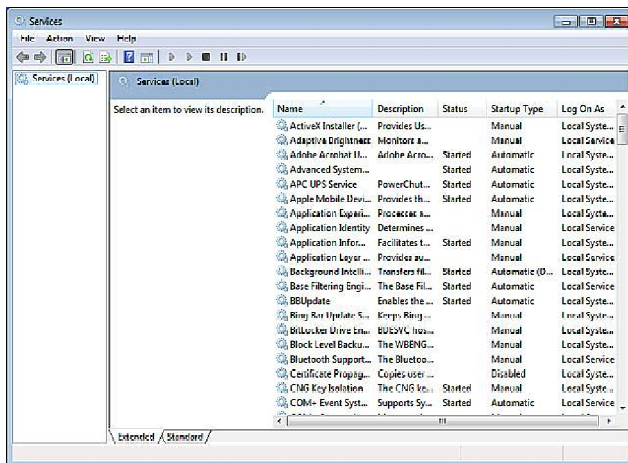
the network hard drives displayed in the Browse window:



And there are, my two network hard drives:



Just select them and they now show up in the Computer:



Own the Cloud with ownCloud!

by Drew Kwashnak, Danbury Computer Society. Jan 2012

I love the cloud. I love the accessibility, and freedom it provides. Unfortunately that freedom is limited because the host can go offline, offline; hold my files for ransom, or worse! Then there is question about privacy and lack of control over your own content. Proprietary formats create a vendor-lock-in that traps you unwittingly to their services.



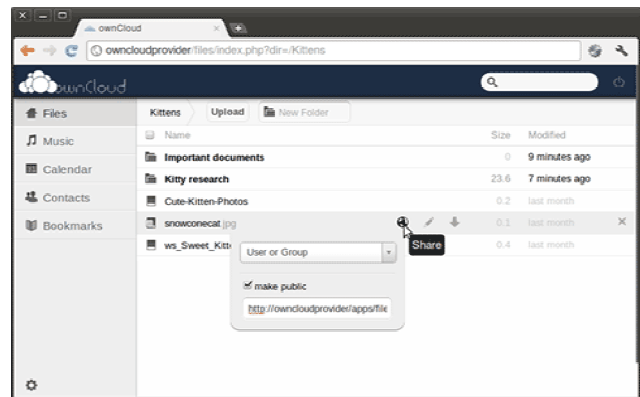
Maybe one solution could be a ‘private cloud’ where it gives you the advantages of the cloud, yet you have full control over the content. That’s the premise behind ownCloud1.

It is a free, open source project that runs on a Linux web server whether the server is local behind a firewall or hosted somewhere accessible such as on Amazon’s Web Services which, by the way, is where Dropbox stores those files you upload.

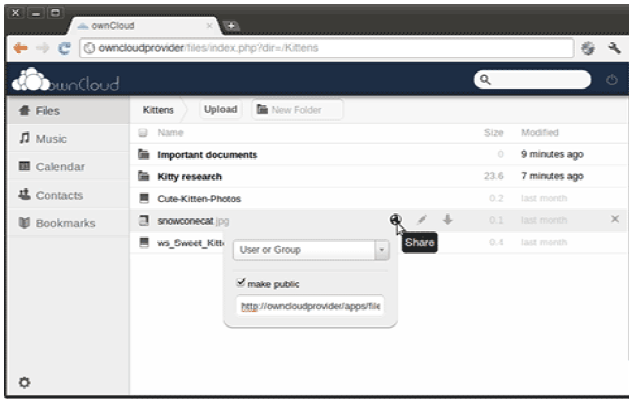
The requirements on top of Linux for ownCloud are fairly basic; Apache, PHP 5 and either MySQL or SQLite for database. Some Linux distributions even include a pre-built package that installs everything you need for you.

There are steps to install and run ownCloud on a Windows system, using IIS here outlined in the ownCloud mailing list2. Apple Mac OS X, being UNIX, is almost as easy to host ownCloud in Apache as Linux.

While ownCloud has sharing, music streaming, calendar, contacts, users & groups, OpenID, LDAP, WebFinger, and remoteStorage compatibility the most important feature is WebDAV file storage where you can add, remove and move files through the web browser or from your local computer!



With WebDAV client computers can access the ownCloud files almost as easily as they can open and save files to their local systems! This works in Linux, MacOS X and Windows.



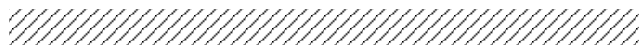
And that's not all! The developers of ownCloud are working to include an image gallery for your photos, an online text editor, encryption for your security, storage of bookmarks, server and client synchronization and Android or WebOS apps. Being open source, the possibilities are actually practically endless!

So if you like the idea of the cloud, but not the idea of giving control over your files and information to some 3rd party, and if you have some spare machines lying around the house you can easily create your own cloud, where you Own the Cloud!

<http://owncloud.org/>

<http://mail.kde.org/pipermail/owncloud/2011-December/001798.html>

<http://owncloudtest.blogspot.com/2011/06/what-you-can-do-with-owncloud-today.html>



Pocket-dialing: The great mystery

by Jefferson Graham, USA TODAY
as seen in January 2112 Bearly Bytes,
Big Bear Computer Club

The phone rings. You answer, but while you know the person is there, they don't know that they have called you.

You've just been "pocket-dialed," or "butt-dialed," and are the unintended recipient of an accidental call emanating from someone's pocket or purse.

"Pocket-dialing is a great mystery," says Charles Golvin, an analyst with Forrester Research.

Standard cell phones, with their physical keypads, were more susceptible, but touch screen iPhones and Android handsets make random calls too. No fix for this modern calamity is yet firmly in place:

Chicago area 911 operators say that many wireless calls they get are mistaken pocket-dialers, according to CBS. On the other hand, some pocket-dialed 911 calls have been positive. Just last week, two thieves were apprehended after robbing a Target store in Madison, Wis. While driving away and bragging about plans to hock the stash, they pocket-dialed 911 by mistake and were apprehended.

If you find that your phone has been making lots of pocket dials, go to settings and add password protection. That way, no non-emergency call will be made unless you type in a password first. On Apple's iPhone, you can lock your screen by simply pressing the sleep/wake button at the top of your phone.

It seems that everyone has a pocket-dialing story to tell. We recently stopped by the Universal CityWalk entertainment facility in Los Angeles to ask folks about "butt dials" and how they deal with them. We also opened up the question to USA TODAY readers and got many fun responses.

One reader cautions about a new frontier: Pocket-texting!

"Pocket-dialing is so mechanical-keyboard ago," says Ray Butler from Elizabethtown, Ky. "I get and send texts by mistake much worse than pocket-dialing. Just yesterday at 4 a.m. I was headed to the airport to pick up my daughter. Instead of texting her to get up (r u up yet), I texted a co-worker."

Editor's note: This article was furnished by Bob Brown and sent to me because I am guilty of making unintended calls (more often than I think) from my cell phone. I learned he is one of my victims. I find that after I have been talking to someone on the phone, in my efforts to return the phone to my carrier on my belt, I manage to touch something on the touch screen, which starts the calling process. At times, I think it redials the last person I called, however, a few times I have found that not to be the case. The solution is to lock the phone before I store it. It takes an extra concerted effort to do this but I am trying to remember to make that effort. The real problem; I guess I am a slow learner. But as indicated above, I am not alone. Jerry Heaton CKCS



“ICE” and Your Cell Phone Can Help Save Your Life”

Big Bear Computer Club Bearly Bytes January, 2012

You may have never heard of the ACEP, American College of Emergency Physicians, but their new consumer website is one you might want to visit. With the number of emergency room visits growing rapidly, this organization has put together a website where patients can access health information, share stories, and get involved in advocacy efforts. www.acep.org

Visits to the emergency department hit a new high in 2006. A record 119.2 million people, up from 115 million, were recorded by the Centers for Disease Control, with an average of 227 visits per minute. The American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) predicts those numbers will only keep rising.

According to the report, age groups with the highest visit rates were infants under 12 months of age and those over the age of 75. In fact, people aged 65 and older are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population and are the most likely to be admitted to the hospital of all emergency patients. Researchers conclude that visits for patients between 65 and 74 could nearly double from 64 million in 2003 to 111.7 million by 2013. Despite these numbers, emergency departments continue to close - causing delays for people with serious medical conditions like heart attacks.

In honor of its 40th anniversary, ACEP will be making available video clips featuring emergency medicine pioneers, vintage photographs and radio public service announcements. In addition, the organization is launching a new consumer website, EmergencyCareForYou.org, which features extensive public information. The year-long campaign is sponsored in part by General Motors OnStar, Ultrasonix & ZOLL Medical Corporation.

The EmergencyCareForYou website is a comprehensive site that you will want to visit. It has information on everything from “how to tell if it is an emergency” to “family disaster preparedness.”

One important section of this website talks about how “ICE” and Your Cell Phone Can Help Save Your Life. The website states, “Emergency physicians are recommending that people with cellular phones add “ICE” entries into their cell phone address books. This stands for “In Case of Emergency,” and medical professionals are using it to notify the person’s emergency contacts and to obtain critical medical information when a patient arrives unconscious or unable to answer questions.”

It sounds like a great idea! Check it out. It may save your life. More information can be found at the ICEfor-Help website www.iceforhelp.com Permission: Community Computer Club of La Verne - Judy Taylour, Editor

SKYPE Can Expose Your Location

as seen in Big Bear Computer Club Bearly Bytes January, 2012

Remember when a prankster could make himself a general nuisance by calling your home phone and quickly hanging up?

The equivalent of a prank call on Skype, the popular voice-over-Internet-Protocol service, can be much more than a nuisance. If you are logged in to Skype, a prankster or thief or spy can effectively track where you are and in some circumstances, what you do and even what you download, according to an experiment led by Keith Ross, a computer science professor at the Polytechnic Institute of New York University in Brooklyn.

Mr. Ross, along with his collaborators at the French computer research institute, Inria, followed 10,000 randomly selected Skype users over 16 days.

If a user’s Skype application was running, the researchers could call inconspicuously and, in the process of placing the call, glean the user’s Internet Protocol address. Every hour, the researchers logged an I.P. address for each user. That address could in turn be used to determine the user’s geographic location in some cases, right down to the ZIP code.

The researchers then winnowed the large sample to a handful of volunteers who agreed to let themselves be tracked. In one example, one Skype user was seen logging in to Skype from the network of a New York City university, followed by a visit to Chicago, a return to the university and then to his home in France.

Those whose Skype handles are identical or similar to their real names are that much more visible. The researchers could potentially find much more about them on a variety of social networks.

“If we had followed the mobility of the Facebook friends of this user as well, we likely would have determined who he was visiting and when,” the researchers said.

It is not enough to refuse a Skype call from a stranger. In a peer-to-peer network, just establishing a connection between two peers is enough to reveal an I.P. address. That I.P. address can then also be used to look for what large files have been downloaded to that device using BitTorrent, a peer-to-peer system that is most commonly used to share pirated movies and music.

Skype, which is owned by Microsoft, said it was aware of the issue. “We value the privacy of our users and are committed to making our products as secure as possible,” Adrian Asher, the company’s chief information security officer, said in a statement. “Just as with typical Internet communications software, Skype users who are connected may be able to determine each other’s IP address. Through research and development, we will continue to make advances in this area and improvements to our software.”

Mr. Ross, the computer science professor, suggested the following precautionary measures to avoid Skype users. It’s

probably best not to leave your Skype application running all the time, just when you are planning to make or receive a call. Users are also slightly more protected if they choose a Skype handle that is different from their real name. Source: The New York Times-Bits

OPERATING SYSTEM NOTES & TIPS

Better File Information with Windows Explorer Sort your files more intelligently with a few simple clicks.

by Les Townsing, Melbourne PCUG, Australia

There is often a lot of information automatically recorded when you save a file. This information can be easily displayed and can prove to be useful when sorting/categorizing files. Normally, when you open Windows Explorer (right-click on the Start button and select "Explore") you get displays indicating the file name, size, date modified, and other general information (see below).

If, however, we right-click anywhere on the Column Heading bar we get a lot of additional columns we can add. Depending on the type of files you can select some meaningful columns. If we are looking at picture files (jpg) some appropriate columns may be Date Taken, Dimensions or file size.

If you right-click on a file and select properties, you get to view all the possible information as well as the ability to edit some of the fields.

You can now sort your files by any of the columns (just left click on the column heading).

If we right-click on a file, we can select Rename and change the name to a more meaningful title rather than a bunch of numbers. These features may be more meaningful if we use music files as an example.

Unfortunately, some of the Ripper programs (programs that copy CDs and often convert the files to MP3s) get it wrong or leave a lot of stuff out, which can be quite annoying, particularly if it is the artist's name or the title of the song.

When selecting a CD Ripper program this is one item worth checking.

Extra Tip: If you select a file (click on it) then hold down the shift key whilst clicking on another file then the system will select all the files in between and including the first and last file you clicked on. Now, if you right-click on any one of the selected files and choose properties, you can edit a field for all the selected files. This is no good for titles as every file must have a different name. However, it is good when you want to edit the album title or artist for a number of tracks.

Extra Extra Tip: Often the files you want to select are not consecutive in a list. No problem, hold down the control key then click on the files you want. As you click on the files they become marked as selected. You can then right-click on any selected file to edit the properties of all the selected files.

HARDWARE NOTES & TIPS

A Tablet for the Holidays

By Vinny LaBash, Regular Columnist, Sarasota PCUG, Fla
November 2011 issue, Sarasota Monitor, www.spcug.org,
labash (at) spcug.org

The first thing you need to know about buying a tablet is that you are not going to get top dollar performance for a bottom dollar price. You get what you pay for. Buying one of these devices based on price is a guarantee of disappointment. Deciding on which tablet to buy, either for yourself or as a gift, should depend generally on what you plan to do with it.

Most people who buy these devices have some mixture of the following in mind: playing games or computer-specific tasks. E-readers do one thing very well; they are designed for reading magazines and books. Barnes and Noble's Nook Color has a seven inch multi-touch screen which is also great for web browsing and playing casual games. Bejeweled looks spectacular and the traditional Microsoft games work well. You can play Angry Birds too.

A nice feature is the ability to read magazines in full color. It's a much more satisfying experience than traditional black and white even though it doesn't improve content. The Nook Color is great for watching short videos. Even the biggest smart phone screen can't come close to matching it.

Amazon is scheduled to release an updated version of its Kindle e-reader in time for the holidays. It's not available now so we can't comment on it. What we can say is if an e-reader is something you are interested in, be sure to check out Amazon's new product before buying.

If you are sure you want a tablet, resolve to get a good one or don't bother. If you end up with a cheap underpowered unit with too little processing power or memory to save money, you will end up frustrated for as long as you own the device. You want a processor with a speed greater than 1GHz, lots of memory, and a responsive touch screen.

Good specifications are a must, but they are not the whole story. The decisive factor should be about how the tablet fits to the way you want to use it. If you're considering an Android device, get your apps from the official Google Android Market. It's the only way to be sure that the app is properly integrated with the Android software.

With seemingly every manufacturer on the planet trying to knock off the iPad, new ones are appearing in the marketplace almost daily. There is no way to keep track of all of them, so

if you're dying to know what your options are, here is a general overview of the tablet landscape.

The iPad is king and unlikely to be dethroned in the near future. This tablet requires almost no learning time, and its ease of use remains unsurpassed. The number of apps, games and media available for it far exceeds that of any other competitor. It was designed as a cloud computing device, which means that data is not stored on it, making it inherently secure. You should try it before making any final decisions. Android-based tablets offer the next most widely available set of alternatives if the iPad's price, size or capabilities fail to meet your requirements. They are also cloud based devices making them perfect for retrieving information anywhere an internet connection is available.

Tablets running Windows software have been around for over a decade. They continue to improve and evolve, but they are still inferior to the iPad and Android systems. They resemble laptops more than anything else with their wide variety of physical keyboards. If a Windows environment is what you're looking for, look no further. Microsoft plans to release Windows 8 sometime next year, and perhaps that will be the catalyst to propel these systems to a more prominent place in the minds of potential customers. Before being carried away with the immersive experience of a tablet, it may be wise to consider why they might not be right for you. If you like the portability of a smart phone especially the ability to carry it in your pocket, that's an experience you won't get with a tablet.

Laptops have far more horsepower than the most powerful tablet. If power is what you need, a tablet may let you down. If computer power is your heart's desire, an inexpensive laptop is probably a better choice. Common shortcomings among most laptops are lack of a replaceable battery, poor printer support, and awkward virtual keyboards. In addition, lousy business software, smudgy screens, and compatibility problems with Adobe Flash are often cited among tablet users.

If your typical work day finds you heavily involved with creating and editing lengthy documents, large spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations, and lots of email, visions of using a tablet productively may be delusional.

A high end tablet can go for around \$800. A decent laptop or smart phone can be picked up for less and probably do more. Forget price for a moment and take the time to evaluate what you expect from a tablet. Is it really a better value for you and a better fit than a good smart phone or laptop? If the answer is yes, then go for it.

Computer Hardware Ports: What They Are and What They Do

from Big Bear Computer Club Bearly Bytes January, 2012

It's likely that you've heard the term 'port' used in reference to computers, but you may not know exactly what a port is or how it is used. You may also be wondering if you actually need ports on your computer. The answer to that question is undoubtedly yes. Your computer's ports allow you to plug various cables and pieces of equipment into your computer. They're the holes in various shapes you see on the back, sides or front of your computer or laptop.

Types of Ports

The first thing you'll realize when you look at the ports on your computer is that they are not all the same size and shape. This is because there are several types of ports. The most commonly used port on any computer is the USB port. It's a thin, rectangular port that has a white or black piece inside. Computers typically have three or more USB ports since so many devices plug into them. Gadgets that utilize the USB port include key-boards, mice, flash drives and mobile phones.

Another common port found on most computers is the VGA port. This port is D-shaped and has 15 holes arranged in three rows. This port allows users to plug a monitor into the computer. Although not necessary for laptop users, anyone using a tower-style computer needs a monitor to use the computer.

There are quite a few other types of ports that can be found on computers, including FireWire, HDMI and Ethernet. You'll want to make sure you have a compatible port for all devices you plan to plug into your computer. Any time you're shopping for computers or peripheral devices (devices that plug into your computer), make sure you check to see if you've got the right types of ports.

Why You Need Ports

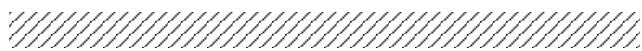
Computer ports are essential for all computers. Many devices will not work if they aren't connected to your computer via some type of port. While there are several types of technology that allow devices to interact with your computer wirelessly, including WiFi and Bluetooth, certain things must be done via a direct cable connection. One example of this is charging your iPod or smart phone. You can transfer files wirelessly using Bluetooth, but you must connect the device via a cord to charge it.

Many computers these days come with wireless networking cards built in. A wireless network card allows you to connect to a computer network as well as the Internet without plugging anything into your computer. You may be wondering why these same computers also have an Ethernet port, which is the port needed to connect to a computer network via an Ethernet cable. There are two main reasons to make sure

your computer has an Ethernet port as well as a wireless card. First, in the event your wireless card fails, you'll want a backup way to connect to your network and the Internet.

If you return home one day to find out you have no Internet connectivity, you'll need to troubleshoot your equipment to find out which component isn't working properly. Most Internet service providers will ask you to connect your computer directly to your modem with an Ethernet cable so they can help you determine if it's the wireless connection or the Internet connection that isn't working.

Certain types of ports are standard on all computers, while others, including older port types and newer high-tech ports, may not be. Before purchasing a new computer or any other devices, make sure you've got ports to accommodate the various devices you plan to use with your computer. As you can see, ports are vital to your computer to work in the way you'd like it to. You would be very limited without them! ~ WorldStart.com



Disks - What would our computers be without them?

By Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

Well, they'd be Tablets, or Smartphones, neither of which have disks as integral parts of the hardware. The Disk or Disk Drive usually refers to the component of the computer that typically stores large amounts of data. Storage can be, only readable, or readable and writeable (or recordable).

There are two types of Disk Drives that are usually part of a Personal Computer, Magnetic and Optical. Magnetic drives are typically readable and writable. Now-a-days, magnetic drives store in the hundreds of Gigabytes (1 Gigabyte = 1,000 Megabytes). Optical drives are either readable (ROM) or recordable (RAM). Optical drives come in three different storage sizes, CDs (Compact Disks) which hold 700 Megabytes, DVDs (Digital Versatile Disks) which hold 4.7 Gigabytes, and BDs (Blu-ray Disks) which hold 25 Gigabytes. Magnetic Disks or Magnetic Disk Drives, or Hard Drives, (can any of you remember the term, Winchester Drive), are at the very core of the personal computer. For those of you who remembered "Winchester", the original IBM PC didn't even have a hard drive. It only had one or possibly two 5 < inch floppy disks. Remember the a: drive? And I bet there are only a few of you who ever had a b: drive (the second floppy).

The hard drive came along around 1983, with the IBM PC/XT, and was assigned as the c: drive. Then came Optical drives, the CD ROM (around 1985), and the recordable version, the CD RAM (around 1990). These were typically assigned as the d: drive. Finally, The DVD came on the scene with backward compatibility with CDs. The DVD ROM appeared around 1995 and the DVD RAM around 1998. DVD equipment

is backward compatible meaning they can use DVD or CD media (the actual disk). BDs are relatively new, coming on the scene around 2009. The BDs come in BDR which is recordable only once, and BD RE which is recordable and re-recordable. BD equipment is backward compatible meaning they can use BD, DVD or CD media.

Specifying a magnetic disk drive is pretty straightforward. The only variables are the storage capacity and the speed. Today, typically, the speed is 7200 rpm. Although there are some older units around that rotate at 5400 rpm, and there are some fast drives that are running at 10,000 rpm, but they are the exception. So, the defining item is the storage capacity, which today runs from 100 Gigabytes to a few Terabytes (1 Terabyte = 1,000 Gigabytes).

Once the manufacturer is chosen and the speed and storage is picked, the job is about done. The only other factor is the interface. SATA (Serial Advanced Technology Attachment), today, is the preferred interface, but only if your computer has the hardware to support it. The older interface is called IDE (Integrated Drive Electronics), and sometimes called PATA (Parallel Advanced Technology Attachment)

Specifying Optical Disks is somewhat more involved. The first decision is the storage capacity. Today, DVD drives are probably the most cost effective (the best storage per dollar). Because DVD drives are backwards compatible they can be used with DVDs or CDs. BD drives are currently quite expensive and will probably not be found on most personal computers. BD drives will probably be around \$100 in contrast to about \$35 for a DVD drive. If you have only one DVD drive on your computer, it should probably be a drive that is capable of writing disks as well as reading them. If you have the luxury of two optical drives (probably on a desktop), one can be just readable, which will keep the cost of the pair to a minimum. Optical Drives that are capable of writing are sometimes called "Burners" because the writing operation uses a laser to "burn" data spots on to the disk media.

The round 120 millimeter (4.7 inch) disk that you insert into the Optical Disk drive is called the disk media. The media type should match the Disk Drive type, meaning that you typically use CD media in a CD Drive, DVD media in a DVD drive, and BD media in a BD drive, although there is backward compatibility. For Optical disk media, readable means that the disk can be written only once and then read many times; read/writable means that the disk is readable and can be written and re-written many times.

CD disk media comes in two types, CD-R (readable), and CD-RW (read/writable). Unfortunately, DVD disk media comes in two disk varieties DVD- (the dash variety), and DVD+ (the plus variety), as well as being readable or read/writable. The good news is that, now-a-days, all drives can use either of these varieties. (Although, I have heard that some people prefer the

DVD- for movies. They have reported better results with that variety for movies that were created on the computer DVD disk drive and then played on their living room DVD player.) So, typically, DVD Drives can accommodate DVD-R (read only), DVD-RW (read/writable), DVD+R (read only), or DVD+RW (read/writeable) media. This is usually indicated by stating that the drive can be used with DVD1R disk media (readable), or DVD1RW (read/writable) media. Fortunately, BD disk media does not have the same problem. There is only one variety for BD disks, BD-: BD-R (readable), and BD-RE (read/writable).

Now that we have chosen an optical disk drive based on storage capacity, and we now know what media we can use with the drive, the last thing to look at is the speed of the drive. For Drives that only read, this is not really an issue because the read speed is typically faster than any of the writing speeds. An Optical Drive writing speed is specified as #X. Currently, for DVDs, # is a number between 1 and 52. This number indicates the speed relative to the original disk writing speed. So an Optical Disk capable of writing at 12X would write a disk 12 times faster than the original writing speed.

The original writing speeds for the different Optical Drive types are: CD=.15Mbps; DVD=1.35Mbps; BD=4.5Mbps. So a 12X DVD Drive would write data at 12 times 1.35Mbps, or 16.2Mbps. Optical Disk media is also rated for writing speed in the same way. When you buy Optical Disk media it is always good to buy media that is at least as fast as your drive so that you take advantage of your drive's maximum speed. If it is not at a great expense, faster media will probably give you better, although not faster results.

Disk drives, magnetic and optical, give the computer the ability to store and access enormous amounts of data. Without these devices we might be confined to only using the "cloud" for our storage (do any of you remember "mainframe" computing?). But, even with these devices, they may be the direction personal computing is taking, anyway.



Smart Computing Tips

Big Bear Computer Club Bearly Bytes January, 2012

Word: Key Tips

New versions of Microsoft Office Word have Key Tips, which are special keyboard shortcuts. Press the ALT key to make the Key Tips appear on the Ribbon, then press the corresponding key on the key-board to activate the feature or open the tab. For example, you can open the Insert tab in the Ribbon by pressing ALT and then pressing N. From there, you can press P to activate the Insert Picture command.

Personalized Screen Saver

You don't have to use the boring Windows screen saver. Instead, use your own folder of photos to personalize your PC. Copy the photos you want to use to a folder on your hard drive. Right-click a blank area on your Windows desktop, click Properties, and then click the Screen Saver tab. From the Screen Saver drop-down box, click My Pictures Slideshow, and click Browse to designate the appropriate folder of photos.

Mouse Pointer Personalized

If you're tired of the looking at the same old, white-arrow mouse pointer, Windows XP will let you change it to something different. From the Start menu, point to Control Panel, point to Settings, and then click Control Panel.

Double-click the Mouse icon and then click the Pointers tab. Below the Customize box, click Browse, and you'll see dozens of different icons you can use for your pointer. To customize in Vista, click the Windows button, Control Panel, Mouse (under Hardware And Sound), and the Pointers tab.

Right-Click Copy

When you want to copy a file or folder, you don't necessarily have to use the left mouse button. You can click and drag the file using the right mouse button, too. When you release the button you'll see a small context menu prompting you to perform an action. You can Copy Here, Move Here, or Create Shortcut Here.

Lightning Fast Lines

A horizontal line spanning the width of a Word document can be helping in illustrating a clean break in a thought. AutoCorrect creates a number of different lines according to three characters you can type. If you type three consecutive hyphens, underscores, or equal signs and press enter, Word creates a line, bold line, or double line, respectively.

www.smartcomputing.com

Help Lines

TOG Member Web Pages

by Carl Tenning

TOG members may have a free personal web page hosted under the TOG account. Contact the webmaster at webmaster@toggle.org if you would like to post your own web page. You will receive your own URL that the world can access without having to open the TOGGLE web page. However, a link to your page will be posted on the TOGGLE front page. Here are the members who currently have personal web pages posted:

- Carl Tenning
<http://carlten.toggle.org>
- Ray Mills
<http://rm-a.toggle.org>
- Tom Stepanek
<http://tom-step7.toggle.org>
- Robert Thomson
<http://rjthomson.toggle.org>

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.
Win95/98/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 13 Feb 2012 -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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President Carl Tenning (206)824-3843
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web page: <http://carlten.net/html>
VP/Prog Chair Vacant
Sec/Treas Bob Henkel (253) 537-6732
bobh@nventure.com
Disk Library Tom Stepanek (253) 922-7939
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Newsletter Editor Bob Thomson (253) 752-5582
rjthomson@comcast.net
Kitsap County Rep Ray Mills (360) 692-7568
e-mail: r.mills@rm-a.com
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Deadline: 15th of this month to appear
in next months' issue, if room

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on the mailing label of this issue of
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is an error or you have any con-
cerns, please email the treasurer,
Bob Henkel, at
bobh@nventure.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 rela-
tionship 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 pre-
fer to take Portland southbound to 99th.
At 99th turn west over the tracks and
there you are!



TOGGLE

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1808 Lenore Drive
Tacoma, WA 98406-1920

Change Service Requested

PROGRAMS

This Month's Meeting

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

No formal program presentation has
been announced at press time but
recent unauthorized entries and possi-
ble tracking codes which have been
discovered on our web page will un-
doubtedly be discussed.