TOGGLE

THE MICROCOMPUTER TURN (ON)

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR TACOMA-SEATTLE AREA MICROCOMPUTER USERS

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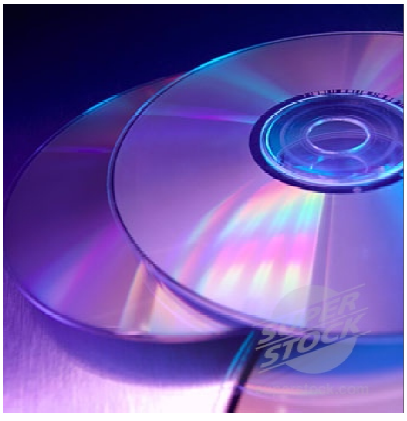


UPDATE

Communications

In *Speaking Notepad* the author writes:''Would you like to have your WORD documents read to you by Mary? Would you like to have Biff voice your emails? How about having Wanda recite your clip board contents? This is the simple reason for a program called Speaking Notepad. In one of twenty voices, it will read .TXT, .DOC, .HTML and .RTF documents to you starting at any point in the document that you wish.''

In *Bluetooth* the author notes that:''Bluetooth is the name given to a technology that uses short-range radio links, and is intended to replace the cable(s) connecting portable and/or fixed electronic devices. ''

In *Using DNS to avoid malicious sites* the author says: ''There are frequent zero-day exploits for vulnerabilities in common software. A zero-day exploit is one for which no security patch yet exists. The bad guys are reverse-engineering security patches to develop and distribute malware that exploits vulnerabilities before people get the security patches installed that fix those vulnerabilities.''

Spreadsheet

In *One Column EXCEL Tip* the author tells you how to print out that huge spreasheet without using a ream of paper.

General Interest

In *Online After Death* the author points out that just because you cease to exists, your on-line presence will not and discusses some of the things entailed when you die. Something to think about.

In *The Tip Corner* the author covers several subjects including *Fixing USB Hard Drive, Burning DVD discs in Windows 7, Recording Home Videos to DVD, Recording TV Shows to DVD Disc, Sharing Digital Photos The Easy Way and Burn a DVD From an Image File.*

In *The Limitations of Transferring Music & Video from iTunes* the author sez:''The main limitations of transferring media from iTunes lie in the inability to easily control how files are added to hard drives and partitioned hard drives. Additionally, synchronization of libraries is not a built-in feature in iTunes. ''

In *How to Plug in Your USB Right the First Time* the author sez: ''Wouldn't it be nice if you didn't have to spend time fiddling with the USB plug Every. Single. Time? '' She tells you a realy easy solution to the proble,

In *The Trouble with Terabytes* the author sez : ''...having a 1 terabyte drive is passe as 2 TB, 3 TB and even 4 TB drives are becoming commonplace. However, there are some things to be aware of before making the leap.''

Hardware

In *NAS for home - More than just a big hard drive* the author describes the equipment he has set up to paly music form any device throughout his house.

COMMUNICATIONS NOTES & TIPS

Speaking Notepad

By Qwerty Studios
Reviewed by Al Kunz, NJPCUG

Would you like to have your WORD documents read to you by Mary? Would you like to have Biff voice your emails? How about having Wanda recite your clip board contents? This is the simple reason for a program called Speaking Notepad. In one of twenty voices, it will read .TXT, .DOC, .HTML and .RTF documents to you starting at any point in the document that you wish. With additional downloading, Speaking Notepad can speak in ten otherlanguages. But, let's start at the beginning.

After downloading Speaking Notepad (a 3.2 MB download) from the Qwerty Studios website (QwertyStudios.com), it installed without any problems. However, the installation program for this application does not contain all of the files necessary to run the application. Speaking Notepad requires the Microsoft Text to Speech Engine, Microsoft Speech API (SAPI) and at least one Text-to-Speech (TTS) Voice installed in your system However, you need not download them manually because Speaking Notepad's installer does this automatically. The system requirements are very modest. It requires Windows98/ME/NT/2000/XP/2003, 32MB RAM, a Pentium 2 266 MHz, 5 MB of Hard Disk space and a sound card. Once installed it was ready to go.

The main operating window was obviously designed with sight impaired users in mind in that the most used control icons are large and easy to find. Additionally, you can choose from a selection of twenty different voices. Each voice can have its voice speed and pitch customized to suit your preferences. Once you have chosen your voice du jour, it is a simple matter of opening the document to be read within Speaking Notepad, clicking your cursor at the point at which you want the reading to begin and hitting the start button. I'll not stretch your credibility by telling you that the reading sounds natural. It is a mechanical voice and it sounds like one. However, with the speed and pitch controls, you can get the voice to a point where the monotone cadence is almost a non-issue. I was somewhat surprised at the ease with which it handled abbreviations. For example, it read '32 MB RAM' as 32 Megabits RAM; it read 'MHz' as Megahertz; it read 'support@QwertyStudios.com as support at QwertyStudios.com. Speaking Notepad will also read each word as you compose a new document within the program. It also has all of the normal editing features (copy, delete, paste, cut, select all, etc.) that you would expect in a word processor. This is a handy feature for folks like me that still have to look at the keyboard while typing. As a test of its capabilities and of my writing prowess, I will have Speaking Notepad read this review to me once it is finished. One last handy feature consists of the ability to read a document into a sound file, either WAV or MP3.

Speaking Notepad sells for $14.95. Not a large sum to pay for a program that will give your eyes a rest, serve as a powerful adjunct to your eyes or become very useful as an additional proofing tool for your many writing chores. Give it a shot.

P.S. - It passed the test of reading this review with flying colors.

Bluetooth

By Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
October 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor; www.spcug.org
president (at) spcug.org

Not a dental diagnosis or a rare tooth problem

Bluetooth is the name given to a technology that uses short-range radio links, and is intended to replace the cable(s) connecting portable and/or fixed electronic devices. The vision is that it will allow for the replacement of the many propriety cables that connect one device to another with one universal radio link. Its boasts such key features as robustness, low complexity, low power and low cost, and it was designed to be operated in noisy frequency environments.

Bluetooth is a communications standard for interconnecting electronic devices and is defined by the Bluetooth specification. Bluetooth uses a form of data packet switching, a technology that is used to transmit digital data via a wireless communications link. Bluetooth operates in the unlicensed ISM (Industrial, Scientific and Medical) 2.4GHz frequency band, and avoids interference from other signals by hopping to a new frequency after transmitting or receiving each packet.

Here is a little history, for you tech history buffs, to show how long Bluetooth has been around. Work on Bluetooth was started in 1994 by two Ericsson Corporation engineers, and the Bluetooth 1.0 specification was released May 1998. Version 1.0, with a data rate less than 1 Mb/s, had many problems, and manufacturers had difficulty making their products interoperable. Bluetooth 2.0 was released November 2004 with a faster data transfer rate (approx. 2.1Mb/s). And finally, Bluetooth 3.0 was released April 2009 with a date rate of up to 24Mb/s with improvements and new features and is the current standard.

Bluetooth uses a radio technology called frequency-hopping spread spectrum which chops up the data being sent and transmits chunks of it on up to 79 different frequencies. Bluetooth provides a way to connect and exchange information between devices such as Smartphones, laptops, personal computers, printers, Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers, digital cameras, video games, and others.

Bluetooth is an open, wireless protocol for exchanging data over short distances between devices, creating a personal area network (PAN). It was originally conceived as a wireless alternative to the old serial RS-232 data cables. Bluetooth is a network and thus can connect many devices, unlike RS-232 which was strictly serial point-to-point. Bluetooth is primarily designed for low power consumption, with a short range. Three ranges are defined in the standard, 100 meters (Class 1), 10 meters (Class 2), and 1 meter (Class 3). Because Bluetooth devices use radio (broadcast) communications, they do not have to be in line of sight of each other. Bluetooth makes it possible for these devices to communicate with each other and transfer information as long as they are in range.

Both Bluetooth and Wi-Fi are examples of wireless technology that use the unlicensed 2.4GHz frequency spectrum. Both have many applications in today's offices and homes such as: setting up networks, printing, connecting cooperating devices, and transferring data files among computers and smart devices. Wi-Fi is intended as a replacement for cabling for general local area network access in work areas. Bluetooth is intended as a replacement for cabling among equipment in close proximity. Wi-Fi is intended for use in equipment as a wireless local area network (WLAN). Bluetooth is intended for use as a smaller, personal area network (PAN).

A PC uses a Bluetooth adapter in order to communicate with other Bluetooth devices. While some desktop computers and most recent laptops come with a built-in Bluetooth adapter, others require an external adapter, usually in the form of a Bluetooth Dongle. Bluetooth allows multiple devices to communicate with a computer over a single adapter. For Microsoft Windows platforms, Windows XP Service Pack 2, Vista, and Windows 7, all have native support for Bluetooth. (Previous versions required users to install their Bluetooth adapter's own drivers, which were not directly supported by Microsoft.)

Some of the more common applications of Bluetooth are:

- Wireless control of and communications between a mobile phone and a hands-free headset. This was one of the earliest applications.
- Wireless communications with PC input and Output devices, the most common being the mouse, keyboard and printer.
- Replacement of traditional wired serial communications used in: test equipment, GPS receivers, Medical equipment, bar code scanners, and traffic control devices.
- Between game consoles such as Nintendos Wii, and Sonys Playstation and their respective controllers.
- Between video camera and remote monitor in Baby Monitor Systems.
- Between Garage Door Opener Motor and Remote Garage Door Opener Controller.

As you can see from this list, there are many reasons for computer devices to communicate with each other. Here is a quick computer communications concept tutorial. When any two devices need to communicate, they have to agree on a number of things before the communication can begin. The first point of agreement is physical: Will they talk over wires, or through some form of wireless signals? If they use wires, how many are required; one, two, eight, 25? Once the physical attributes are decided, additional questions arise, such as how much data will be sent at a time? For instance, serial ports send data 1 bit at a time, whil-e parallel ports send several bits at once. And, how will they speak to each other? All of the devices in an electronic network need to know what the bits mean and whether the message they receive is the same message that was sent (i.e. checksums at the end of a message).

This means developing a set of commands and responses commonly known as a Protocol. Bluetooth is essentially a networking standard that defines these two levels, physical and protocol. Bluetooth protocols simplify the discovery and setup of services between devices. Before any communications can take place between two Bluetooth devices, they have to be paired. In order to pair two Bluetooth wireless devices, a password (or PassKey) has to be exchanged between the two devices. A Passkey is a code shared by both Bluetooth devices, which proves that both users have agreed to pair with each other.

A very brief description of Bluetooth pairing is as follows: Bluetooth Device A looks for other Bluetooth devices in the area. Bluetooth Device A finds Bluetooth Device B. Bluetooth Device A prompts you, the user, to enter a password (or PassKey). Bluetooth Device A sends the Passkey to Bluetooth Device B. Bluetooth Device B sends the Passkey back to Bluetooth Device A. At this point, Bluetooth Devices A and B are paired and able to exchange data. Data between the devices will be accomplished wirelessly, over-the-air, a great boon to those who dislike the rats nest of wires typically found behind electronic devices.

So, although dentists probably cringe when they hear the term, with all the computer devices you may have or are thinking of getting, theres probably a Bluetooth in your future.

Using DNS to avoid malicious sites

In the article The Failure of Antivirus (Ottawa PC News, November, 2011), I talked about how there is no such thing as a safe web site any more. As reported by the security company Sophos, in 2011, they found 19,000 new malicious URLs per day. Eighty percent of them were compromised, legitimate web sites.

There are frequent zero-day exploits for vulnerabilities in common software. A zero-day exploit is one for which no security patch yet exists. The bad guys are reverse-engineering security patches to develop and distribute malware that exploits vulnerabilities before people get the security patches installed that fix those vulnerabilities. Time frames to react are getting shorter and shorter. Signature file updates in antivirus software is simply not a complete solution any more. New techniques are needed to deal with all this bad stuff.

One technique that has been around for years and is now baked into browsers or available as a plug-in, is to verify the reputation of a web site before allowing your browser to render that content of a web site. Here is an example of how it all works.

Say you want to browse to www.CoolApps.net. The browser or a plug-in will first check the reputation of the web site through a trusted service. If it is not known to be bad, the browser or plug-in will allow the browser to load the page.

Let's say the reputation service gets word that the site www.CoolApps.net has been compromised. They might find out through a report from a user. Or perhaps they have robots checking sites. As soon as they find out that a given site now contains malicious content, they can make a change in their reputation service so that the next time someone who uses their reputation service tries to go to the site, a code goes back to the browser to not load the page. Usually it will cause a warning page to be displayed indicating the site contains known malicious content. The user can then decide to override the warning and go to the site anyway or they can heed the warning and avoid going to the site.

There was one part in the chain of events above that I skipped over. Your browser has no idea about how to get to www.CoolApps.net. It can only go to an IP address, such as 24.103.2.12. How does your computer figure out the IP address to go to? Enter DNS or the Domain Name System. You type in www.CoolApps.net, your computer queries DNS to find the IP address and then your browser connects to the IP address.

What if you could combine DNS with a reputation service? That's exactly what Symantec has done with Norton DNS for Home. All you have to do is configure your DNS settings to point to Norton DNS for Home rather than the typical configuration where you point to the DNS server operated by your Internet Service Provider.

Once configured, all DNS queries go through the Norton DNS for Home server. If the site is not known to be bad, everything operates as usual. If the site is known to be bad, you get directed to a page that tells you why you are being prevented from reaching the site.

More than just malware protection

One of the cool things about Norton DNS for Home is that Symantec is actually running three DNS services. The first one blocks sites for security issues - malware, phishing, scam sites and web proxies. The second blocks based on security issues as well as pornography. The third blocks for security, pornography and what Symantec calls non-family-friendly sites that deal with mature content, abortion, alcohol, crime, cults, drugs,gambling, hate, sexual orientation, suicide, tobacco or violence.

If you have a router that you use to connect multiple computers to the Internet, Symantec recommends that you configure the DNS settings in the router to use Norton DNS for Home. If all computers connecting to the Internet through your router are set up in the default configuration, they will point to the router for DNS and automatically use Norton DNS for Home.

If you only want certain computers to use Norton DNS for Home, you can easily configure individual computers to use Norton DNS for Home. Individual computer configuration is also good when you want to use different levels of protection for different computers. For example, you might have your own computer use protection just for security reasons. On the kids' computer, you might go for protection for security, pornography and non-family friendly.

While Norton DNS for Home is only for personal/home use, Symantec also runs a service for businesses. To see how to configure your computer to use Norton DNS for Home, visit their site at https://dns.norton.com/dnsweb/dnsForHome.do ????

Setting a router to use Norton DNS for Home

Setting DNS in Windows 7 to use Norton DNS for Home Norton DNS for Home blocking access to a 'non-family-friendly' web site

SPREADSHEET NOTES & TIPS

One Column EXCEL Tip

By Bill Sheff, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA The LVCG Journal Nov 2011 nsheff @aol.com

If you ever prepared a spreadsheet that consisted of hundreds of lines and only one or two columns and then decided to print it out, can you do it without running through a ream of paper for just the one or two columns? Well, yeah! But don't look for a simple solution.

Actually, the simplest way is to copy your entire data table (all 100s of rows) to the Clipboard and paste it into Word. You can then format the information in Word to use columns and print as desired. (You can also place headers and footers on your data easier within Word than you can in Excel.)

But if you are a purest and want to do it in Excel here are a couple of ways to print the data in columns on a single sheet of paper. Let's assume you have data that is only one column wide by 100 rows deep.)

1. In cell B2, enter the formula ''=A26''.
2. In cell C2, enter the formula ''=A51''.
3. In cell D2, enter the formula ''=A76''.
4. Copy cells B2:D2 down to row 25.

Your data is now in four columns, without the original data being disturbed. Format your columns to the necessary width, place a page break just before row 26, and print just the first page of your data. You can also save the file as a template for future single column files.

Another approach is to copy the row and column(s) to a different worksheet. This is quick and easy to do using the keyboard (Ctrl+C to copy and Ctrl+V to paste), but there is a drawback. If the row or column you are copying contains formulas that rely on other areas of the worksheet, the copied data may not show the proper results. Thus, the best ''cut and paste'' approach would be to use the Paste Values command rather than just Paste.

GENERAL INTEREST

Online Life After Death

by Mike Lyons, ORCOPUG president
Orange County PC Users Group, May 2012

Recently, my neighbor lost her father and brought her mother to California from Pennsylvania. (got her an apartment and this is where the story begins.

In order to qualify on her own, she needed to provide certain documents (a death certificate, income state- ments, marriage license, pension eligibility information, etc.). The process of gathering all of the paperwork and getting it to the proper agencies took nearly three months and almost became a full time job. If it was this hard in the paper world, how hard would it be in the online world?

An old Internet adage is that once you send something to the Internet it's there forever. & many celebrities and others have learned, you can't retract it. A new Internet rule might state ''just because you're dead doesn't mean that your data is.''

Many states and online sites have an assortment of policies and requirements when it comes to online activities regarding death-including no laws or policies. Others make the surviving parties jump through all kinds of hoops to finally gain control of their departed's online presence. There are stories of people battling two years to gain control.

As more and more people are living their lives online these days, from social media sites to online automatic bill payments to running their businesses, etc., it means that you need to consider your ''exit'' strategy. (It is estimated that three members of Facebook die evel)' minute.)

Besides sites having different policies regarding access to a deceased's online presence, another major obstacle is that online access is password-protected. Without a password, surviving family members may have to resort to time-consuming and costly methods to try and gain control of the departed's online activities.

Many of the laws do not take into account blogs, web- sites, and social sites, among others, in regard to the rights of the deceased and their surviving family. So court cases are defaulting to the online sites' terms-<>f-service or poli- cies. But this can be a problem. There are cases of online crooks using the deceased's information for criminal ac- tivities. So, what can you do to protect yourself and your loved ones (or club officials or business partners)?

We will discuss both online and offline actions that you can take. There are some websites like Death Switch. corn and LegacyLocker.com that we will visit. We will also go over actions you can take with your estate planner and/or attorney that will keep your passwords and activi- ties protected but make them available once you have departed.

Bring a loved one and/or friend to the meeting so you can discuss the subject with them later. One last note: Coco's seems to be monitoring the total dollars ordered per meeting, so if possible, please support the club by ordering from the meeting room.

The Tip Corner

By Bill Sheff, Novice SIG Coordinator, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA
November 2011 issue, The LVCG Journal
nsheff @aol.com

Fixing USB hard drives

Regardless of what kind of repair work you do, a good idea is start with the easiest and cheapest. So if you run into trouble with devices plugged into your computer via a USB cable... let's start with the cable.

Make sure there is a good connection. Remove and reinsert the cable into a different USB slot on the computer. Swap the cable for another USB cable.

Still not working? Double click My Computer in Windows XP or Computer in Windows Vista. The plugged USB hard drive is the removable disk on the list. Right click Properties and see if there is something wrong. If the drive is not listed turn the computer off. If the USB device is not recognized a message appears and unplug all DVD player and click Next. Then simply browse to the digital photo folder you want to backup/burn and drag it into the empty disc folder. When ready to burn click the Burn to Disc box and you are good to go.

Finally, if you are utilizing a USB hub, unplug the device and connect it directly to the USB port. If still not recognized or working the device unfortunately is that the hard drive is very likely defective.

Burning DVD discs in Windows 7

First let's review the two different DVD formats there are. They are DVD- and DVD+. DVD- (dash) was developed by Pioneer in the late 1990's, while DVD+ was developed by the DVD+RW alliance which includes Sony, HP, Ricoh, Yamaha, and others. Just note that all DVD burners now produced support both formats, which makes it easy for the consumer.

However, it should be noted that all things being equal the DVD dash burns slightly faster. Whenever I mention a CD or DVD below it means either a dash or plus format. DVD-R formats are for a one time burn, while DVDRW discs are used for both reading and writing data and can be formatted over and over again.

Today there are many types of multi-media files, including data, audio, and video, and each could require different ways to burn it to a DVD disc correctly. We will discuss common file types, the disc format they should be created in, and the type of blank disc to use for best results.

For Home Videos (from a camcorder or downloaded video) they should be created with an Authoring software such as Windows DVD Maker in a DVD-Video project and it's recommended to use DVD-R media.

Digital Photo files can either be backed up using a standard DVD burning software as a data project or be created as a digital photo slideshow by using a compatible software using DVD-R media.

Most Recorded TV shows from Windows Media Center should be Authored with windows DVD Maker in a DVD-Video project and burned to DVD-R media.

Music or audio files can be burned to blank CD-R discs using Windows Media Player. However there are two ways to go about this: First you can create a standard Audio CD which usually holds 74 minutes of music by creating an audio project or you can burn mp3 files as a data project to get more music on a disc. (Just make sure you have a mp3 disc player for proper playback). A recent burn I did holds 182 music files on one CD+ disc, and it plays in my car.

Disc Image Files or ISO files require Windows, Roxio or Nero Disc Image Burner to burn the format correctly on either a blank CD-R or DVD-R disc (it just depends on the file size).

Recording Home Videos to DVD

By utilizing the free Windows DVD Maker already included in Windows 7 installs you can simply and easily create home movie discs from your videos. The software will not make a Hollywood type film but will get you creating a DVD movie that you and your family can enjoy on your TV sets in the living room. You simply start the software, load in some video that you captured off of your camcorder, create a custom DVD menu and burn away. You now have a DVD movie disc that you can watch on any standard DVD player.

Recording TV Shows to DVD Disc

In the old days, if your Windows PC came with a TV capture card you can hook up your cable line or satellite TV box and watch TV on your computer screen, but today with digital signals being encrypted you now need at least a separate cable box or DVR. If you use Windows Media Center you also have a built in DVR where you can record the shows you want. The best part is that you can also now burn them to a DVD disc and watch them on your TV set just like it was intended. To do this in Media Center all you do is insert a blank DVD, then click Burn CD/DVD and choose the Video DVD option. Then select a tit le name for the project and select the video clips or TV shows you want to burn from your media library and click the burn button. Media Center will handle the rest and give you a DVD disc that is properly formatted.

Sharing Digital Photos the Easy Way

One of the easiest ways to preserve, backup, and share your digital photos is to back them up to a blank CD-R or DVD. You can easily accomplish this by using Windows Explorer and choosing the Mastered format. All you do is insert a blank CD or DVD and on the AutoPlay box choose the ''Burn files to disc

using Windows Explorer'' option. When the burn a disc dialog box opens choose a Disc Title and tick the With a CD/ g it to a disc will accomplish this. In Windows 7 you can use Windows Disc Image Burner. This is as easy as right clicking on the .iso file and choosing Burn Disc Image...yes it's that easy now in Windows 7.

Burn a DVD From an Image File

If you come across an image file such as .iso you can watch it using Magic ISo or burn that image to a CD or DVD to see the contents in the file. Since .iso is a container for a file structure you need to extract it and by burning other USB devices on the PC. These may not be compatible with the USB hard drive. Reboot the computer once all the other USB devices are disconnected.

(For some additional data take a look at BurnWorld.com and the article about burning music starting on page 9 in this issue of the newsletter.)

The Limitations of Transferring Music & Video from iTunes

Article by Rob Boirun submitted by Bill Shiff
Lehigh Valley Computer Group (LVCG) LVCG Journal , November 2011

The main limitations of transferring media from iTunes lie in the inability to easily control how files are added to hard drives and partitioned hard drives. Additionally, synchronization of libraries is not a built-in feature in iTunes. There is no way to tag a library as a Main Library while treating other libraries as iPod libraries. Given that, devices like the iPod are capable of supporting multimedia , this is a problem for users. If you cant challenge, but not impossible. Thus the need for a better iPod transfer software other than iTunes.

Apple has been moving into the arena of multimedia with a focused aggression that surpasses the hardware they produce. The ability to efficiently manage libraries across multiple drives is important for multimedia and iTunes is weak in this sense. Perhaps Apple should have added a Video library to complement the iTunes Music folder and this would have made things easier. Maybe this is in the works for the future, but for now it is something that is absent and frustrating. The question remains...what to do about it? It is a hassle, but you can create different folders for new content transfer.

Tip: Use a 3rd party music manager to get the most out of your music on Apple devices. Or see our iPod Trans-fer Software Review Chart.

Transferring a Pre Existing Library on iTunes

Transferring any pre-existing library on iTunes will require that the files be accessed from the area where the files were created. New additions, on the other hand, can be added by changing the location of the iTunes Music fold-er and later additions can go in this folder. A simple alternative to this would be to uncheck the option that allows iTunes to copy any added content to the iTunes Music folder. This will be found in the Options menu. You will need to create a new destination folder if you uncheck this option. The iTunes Music folder is an open book for transfer when this option is unchecked.

It is important to note that iTunes presents further limitations by offering no way to hide content within a library even if you manage to create separate libraries for new media. You will have to do this yourself and hide the file location with encryption or a family safety lock utility. This is of significance if you don't want the kids to get their ears and eyes glued to inappropriate content stored in extensive iTunes libraries.

Transfer your library from an External Source

Since most people have sizeable iTunes libraries, the best thing to do with iTunes is to store all your music on an external hard drive and transfer iTunes files from there. It is good to backup data for any device in the first place. Use Administrator privileges to prevent unauthorized access to files that are private. You can purchase a 500GB external hard drive for under $100 and a 1TB external hard drive for around $160. This is the ideal backup and the ideal security. Do not leave data on iTunes if you want to restrict access. It can be recalled from the external drive as needed and easily transferred to any device or computer.

As for transferring HD movie software with iTunes, there is no hope for creating separate files that can be used with other media software for transfer except for iTunes itself. Considering the pantheon of media software available and the myriad devices available, there is always the option to choose an alternative to iTunes and this might be the proper choice for efficient media transfer.

Download Cucusoft iPod Transfer (And get control of your music)

Note: The path provided in the steps to backup itunes 'C:\Windows\System32\iTunes' may be for WinXP or prior. In Win 7 it's located in C:\Users\(your userid here)\My Music\Itunes

BurnWorld.com
iPod Transfer Software
Cucusoft iPod Transfer
4Media iPod to PC Transfer
MovAVI iCopy
Lenogo iPod to PC Transfer

How to Plug in Your USB Right the First Time

Big Bear Computer Club Bearly Bytes June, 2012
Credit: Nicole Cozma, CNET.com

Visualize yourself holding a USB plug. Now visualize yourself trying to put said USB plug into its port on your computer. Hmm, it didn't go in? You must be holding it the wrong way; try turning it over. Still nothing? Odd, try it the first way again. Oh look, it fits now!

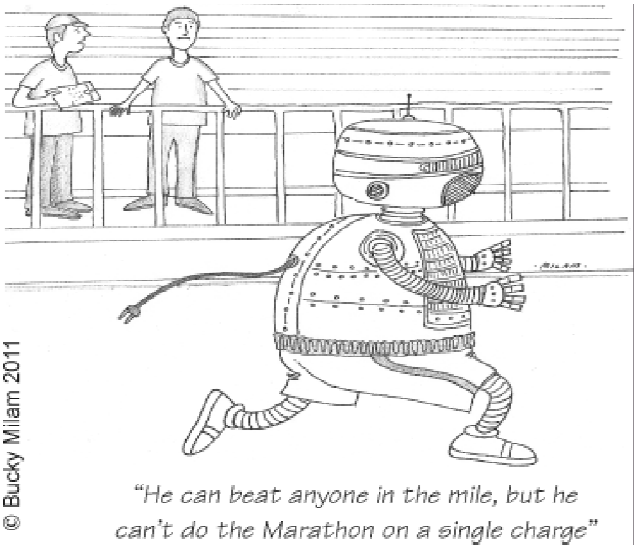
This scenario is something a lot of com-puter users have gone through at least once. Wouldn't it be nice if you didn't have to spend time fiddling with the USB plug Every. Single. Time?

The problem at hand can actually be avoided rather easily. One detail com-monly overlooked on a USB cord is the presence of a raised or printed USB symbol on one side of the plug-end (for almost all cables). Knowing this can make plugging in USB devices a lot less of a hassle, since the side with the symbol is usually facing up or pointed at you from the ports on a monitor.

Since many of the USB cords that come with devices are a dark color (or the symbol is the same color as the rest of the cord/plug), you can mark the symbol side to take out the guess-work in low-light situations. For the marking you could use a bit of Wite-Out, a permanent marker, or even a sticker (perhaps a gold star for getting it right every time?) on the USB symbol side.

A sliver of cork is glued to the side with the USB symbol.

This simple fix may not save you hours of time or relieve stress-related headaches, but it will definitely give you one less thing to shake your head about during your day-to-day computer usage. And since the average day gives us more than enough things to shake our heads about, scratching one thing off the list with such an easy fix is well worth it.



From Danbury Computer Group Newsletter

The Trouble with Terabytes

By Diane Fahlbusch, President, ICON PC User Group, NY
www.iconpcug.org Editor (at) iconpcug.org

Technological advances, different materials and cost efficient manufacturing have made it possible for computers to leap from standard 20 GB hard drives of a decade ago and the 200+ GB drives of yesterday to breaking through the gigabyte ceiling affordably in a relatively short period of time. Now having a 1 terabyte drive is passe as 2 TB, 3 TB and even 4 TB drives are becoming commonplace. However, there are some things to be aware of before making the leap.

No, I will NOT wax poetic about my personal opinion of larger drives, including the ''Scarlet O'Hara'' mindset of maintenance, indiscriminate saving of files and the time for security scans. (For that you can read ''The Lurking Dangers of Larger Hard Drives'' in the June, 2010 issue of The ICON Graphic.) Instead, you will need to consider whether your current computer actually knows what to do with all that storage space.

Not so long ago almost all computer operating systems used the partitioning scheme called the ''Master Boot Record'' (MBR). Unfortunately, the computer will not be able to recognize anything over 2.2 TB. So that larger drive can be installed, but the additional storage space will be useless. The MBR scheme is common on all Windows operating systems through Windows XP, as well as other operating systems from that time period. Windows Vista and the Mac OS X Leopard ushered in the new GUID partition table (GPT) which allows them to recognize the larger drives. Windows 7 and Vista users can use the larger drives as SECONDARY drive without worrying about whether it is a 32 bit or 64 bit version. But for anything larger than a 2 TB drive to be used as the PRIMARY drive, the computer MUST be running the 64 bit version of Windows 7 or Vista.

The systems boot-up firmware must be checked as well. There are many computers using a newer operating system and the GPT partition system, but still using the BIOS firmware. This will need to be updated to the new UEFI firmware, which has become the new industry standard. Check with the terabyte drive manufacturer to see if they offer a firmware update. Of course that updated firmware is useless if the motherboard cannot run the firmware, so again, check with the manufacturer's specifications. Some will work, but you must use a different connection, such as the PCI-Express card slot.

Most newly manufactured computers ARE equipped with 64 bit operating systems, the GPT partition system AND UEFI boot-up firmware. So if you are thinking about running amok in terabyte land, these are some things to know about before upgrading, or buying that new computer. Remember new just means that it has not been used by anyone - it does not necessarily mean that it has the latest technology.

Removing Unremovable Software

by Kim Komando http://www.komando.com/

Kim Komando hosts the nation's largest talk radio show about consumer electronics, computers and the Internet. To get the podcast or find the station nearest you, visit: http://www.komando.com/listen. To subscribe to Kim's free e-mail newsletters, sign-up at: http://www.komando.com/newsletters.

There are portable programs out there that won't include an uninstaller because you don't install them. For these, you simply delete the program folder and you're done.

However, if you aren't using a portable program, then you have your work cut out for you.

The first thing to do is track down the program's installation folder. By default, most programs are installed to C:\Program Files. However, in the 64-bit version of Windows Vista and 7, it might install to the C:\Program Files (x86) folder.

Look for a folder with either the program name or software developer name. Once you find it, take a look inside.

There might be an uninstaller program that just didn't show up in the Start Menu. If there is, then Revo Uninstaller should still work on it. Or you can run the uninstaller directly.

Otherwise, you'll need to delete the entire program folder. Don't forget to clear the Recycle Bin afterward.

If Windows tells you the folder is in use, then you'll need to do some digging. Press ALT+CTRL+DEL and select Task Manager.

Go to the Processes tab and look for a process with the name of the program. If you find it, select it and click End Process.

Once the process disappears, try deleting the program folder again.

If the process won't quit or you can't find one with the program name, then you're likely dealing with a virus. In that case, break out a program like Malwarebytes. This should find and remove virtually any virus.

Once the virus is removed, go back and delete the program's folder. If it still won't delete, you should restart the computer in Safe Mode. Restart, hold F8 during startup and then select Boot in Safe Mode.

Then run a full computer search for the program name and developer name. Some programs install into multiple locations.

After all those folders are cleared, it's time to tackle the registry. Every program that installs adds information to the registry. Removing a program manually will leave this information, which could lead to odd errors and instability down the road.

Note that damage to the registry can cause your computer to behave incorrectly or even become unusable. Make sure you have all your data backed up first.

Grab the program CCleaner, install and run it. Go to the Registry tab and click the Scan for Issues button.

You should see a long list of incorrect entries and missing links. I've never encountered a problem in CCleaner selecting all the suggested entries and clicking Fix select issues.

However, you can also browse through the entries to find just the ones dealing with the problematic program and fix those. That will be marginally safer, but will take much longer.

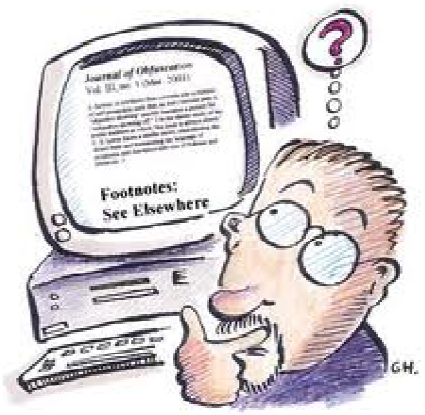
CCleaner will ask you to make a backup of your registry before you continue. Do so and remember where you save the backup file. If something goes wrong, you can double-click the file to restore your registry to the way it was.

While you're in CCleaner, jump to the Tools tab and choose Startup. Make sure the problem program isn't listed there.

If you don't recognize a program set to start up, search for it in Google. You don't want your computer trying to load an unwanted program.

This should take care of the unwanted program. However, if it installed a second program that doesn't appear as a virus, you may have to hunt that down as well and repeat the steps above.

You can use Process Explorer and Google to identify and hunt down programs that can potentially be causing problems.



HARDWARE NOTES & TIPS

NAS for home - More than just a big hard drive

by Bill Wayson bwayson@gmail.com

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My current long-term home computing project is to create a system where I can play any music I own on any suitable player in the house, controlling the playback using one of my highly portable Nokia Internet Tablets. Right now, I am in the midst of setting up centralized storage of all my music, most of which has already been ripped to disk. My goal for this part of the project was simply to buy storage that can be accessed by any device with access to my home network. But in the process of researching and setting it up, I have learned that such devices, particularly those designed for the small office and home office (SOHO) market, offer much more to me than just storage. This month, I will share what I have learned so far about the hardware I have chosen, the Synology DS411slim, and how I would like to use it.

I needed a central place that would hold all my digitized music and be accessible from anywhere in the house. I decided to look for a SOHO network area storage (NAS) device, since networkaccessible disk storage is precisely what a NAS is designed to provide. Since this device might be left constantly running, I wanted one that would consume as little power as possible. I also wanted data protection since I didn't want to put gigabytes of audio onto the NAS only to lose it due to hard drive failure. I wanted RAID 5, which will withstand the failure of one of four drives with no loss of data.

With just these goals, I decided on the Synology DS411slim. Given its use of low-power 2.5" notebook drives, the DS411slim has one of the lowest power consumption specifications in the SOHO NAS market. Since it accommodates up to four drives, it supports most of the popular levels of RAID, including RAID 5, and the various types of data redundancy they provide. Shortly after ordering it, it dawned on me that this same device could store backups of important data, photos, email, and the like that are stored on our home PCs. I'd simply provide shares accessible to anyone on the network and copy data folders into them to back them up. I added this to my configuration goals for the NAS.

Once it arrived, I started exploring it and quickly learned of additional capabilities I could use. After setting up the NAS and connecting it to my home network, I experimented with its built-in audio server. The audio capabilities appear so nice and full-featured, I may make use of them rather than pursuing my original goal of using it as a remote disk that would be used by a small audio-playing PC I would build and connect to a stereo. The DS411slim's Audio Station will stream music across the network and is DLNA (Digital Living Network Alliance) and UPnP (Universal Plug and Play) compliant. DLNA and UPnP certification means that the device will work well with other certified devices, such as the Sony PS3 and Microsoft Xbox360, in a home media network.

My Nokia N900 and N810, along with my wife's new Android phone, all saw and played music stored on my NAS with no configuration required. I liked that, and will investigate if it makes sense to leverage that functionality. In the meantime, the NAS has many other features designed for use in the home that I might be interested in. My wife, Nancy, spends a good deal of time managing her photo collection. The Photo Station application simplifies storing, viewing, managing, manipulating, and downloading photos and videos directly on the NAS. The DS411slim supports a variety of file sharing technologies such as shared folders, FTP, and peer-to-peer sharing services. You can create a web site on it, from the most simple of sites to a blog or a fullfledged e-commerce site. You can attach a USB web camera to the NAS for visual surveillance of your home and office.

Mobile devices, such as Apple and Android phones and tablets are supported. Apple fans will be interested in the DS411slim's ability to act as an iTunes server and an Apple Time Machine. On top of all of these and other services, the NAS can be configured to be accessible from the Internet in a secure manner.

The DS411slim is by no means unique in providing these kinds of applications and functions. Search the Web with SOHO NAS to discover a variety of similar products providing similar functionality. For me, what started as a simple task of setting up accessible centralized storage on my home network has morphed into an interesting education into just how much further home NASes have gone.

For my project of providing access to my music anywhere in my home, I've been given new options that I had not been aware of. It is icing on the cake that what drives the DS411slim, and many of its competitors, is Linux and open source software. For my NAS is really a small, special purpose computer that runs Linux as its operating system, provides its services using open source applications, and has a huge amount of storage available on it. It is a strong example of the power and versatility of free and open software.

Help Lines

HARDWAREHELP	Advisor No.
Reformat Hard Disk, FDISK	2,4,5
Install Hard Drive, CD-ROM/RW	2,4,5
Install Video Card	7
Partitioning Hard Drives	2
Internet/Intranet	6,7
Audio Cards	4
MPs Files, WMA Files, WAV Files	3,4
Burning CD's	3,5
Homesite	7
Net Objects	7

SOFTWAREHELP	Advisor No.
Win 95/98/ME/2K/NT/XP	2,3,4,7
Win 7	4,7
Microsoft Word	2,7
Microsoft Excel	4
Microsoft PowerPoint	4
WordPerfect	1,7
Norton/Symantec AntiVirus	2,3,6,7
Norton System Works	2,7
CompuPic / CompuPic Pro	3,7
Winzip, WinRAR	6
Ccleaner	3,4
Outlook, Outlook Express	2
Internet Explorer	2,7
RegSeeker	3,5
Instant Messaging	2
Installing Software after Reformatting	5
Deleting Files; Wiping	6

ADVISORS

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

Tacoma Open Group for Microcomputers (TOG)
New Member Application/Existing Member Change of Address Form

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

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

Member's Name:_____

Address: _____

City:_____ State:_____ Zipcode:_____Plus Four _____ Country: _____

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

TACOMA MEETING

When: **Mon 9 Jul 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

TOG BOARD MEMBERS

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

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

Corporate Sponsors:

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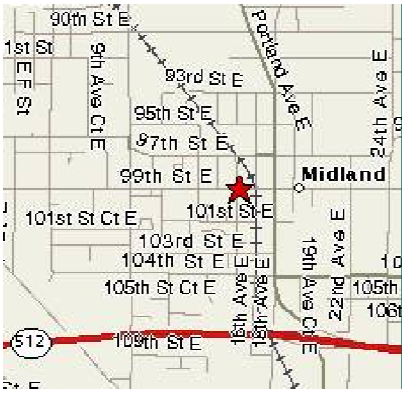
How To get To The Meeting

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



TOGGLE

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

Change Service Requested

PROGRAMS

This Month's Meeting

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

No program has been announced at press time. However, judging from past meetings you can be assured that there will be a lively discussion about topics of interest to the attendees. Come and add to the topics of interest.