

TOGGLE

THE MICROCOMPUTER TURN (ON)

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UPDATE

Communications

In *Microsoft Windows telephone scam Beware!* the author gives addresses of sites that will help you to avoid scams.

In *Hotel Wi-Fi networks installing malware* the author warns that there is a new hacking scheme that you should be aware of. Read. Learn.

In *Text Messaging or "Texting": Tips and tricks* the author tells you stuff that you may or may not know.

In *Evolving Technology* the author recounts his foray into computing and current struggle with new technology.

In *Removing Those << Marks From Forwarded Email* the author recounts how to get rid of them.

In *New Surveillance-Proof App To Secure Communications Has Governments Nervous* the author discusses new super encryption software that even the government can't pry into.

In *Downloading from YouTube* the author notes that if some old software doesn't work he tells you what will and gives software download addresses.

Operating System

In *Should I use sleep, hibernate or shut it down?* the author discusses the pros and cons of shutting down vs simply going into sleep mode.

In *Changing which Windows 7 programs automatically launch* the au-

thor asks: Does Windows 7 automatically select the media player and is it the one you want? In the article he says: "Here is how to make your media do exactly what you expect it to do."

In *What is 'pinning' and how do I do it?* the author tells us that "Pinning" is keeping items within a window in the same place for easy access.... The Windows Start Menu is divided into two sections. The top half of the menu is reserved for pinned items

In *Windows 7 Menus in Windows 8* the author discusses a way to get the traditional start menu in Windows 8?

In *Wiping Hard Disk Data vs Drilling Holes* the author discusses a new disk/file wiper similar to the old BCWipe.

In *Secure Delete For Files Already Deleted* the author discusses another disk file wiper, *sdelete*.

General Interest

In *Some basics about digital photography* as the title suggests - a basic discussion of the subject.

In *Free Windows Utility Lowers Your Printing Costs* the author discusses how to save on ink for draft copies.

Hardware

In *Why would you want more memory in your computer?* the author gives you simple instructions on how to add a memory stick.

COMMUNICATIONS NOTES & TIPS

**Microsoft Windows telephone scam
- Beware!**

By Judy Taylour, President, SCV Computer Club, CA
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This really happened to a user group member in California. This member, who we will call "Jim", became the victim of a phone scam involving Microsoft - but not the "real" Microsoft.

Fearing viruses on his computer, Jim allowed a man on the phone claiming to be from "Microsoft tech support" to enter his computer electronically to check. The caller claimed he "found" evidence of viruses and offered to fix the computer - for a charge. Jim felt uncomfortable with this and said no. The "Microsoft" scammer said he would block the use of the computer if he was not paid. Jim hung up.

Unhappily, Jim discovered afterward that the scammer had sabotaged his computer so that Jim could not use it or the internet. Luckily, there was no financial or other sensitive information on the computer that could also have been taken by the scammer. If it had, that would have been a very sad story.

But Jim will not be able to use his computer again for a couple of days until it has been reformatted and all the programs reinstalled. So, fellow members, this CAN happen to you. Jim wants you to know about and to learn from his awful experience. Here is a link at Microsoft that describes various scams using its name: <http://www.microsoft.com/security/onlineprivacy/msname.aspx>

From the Windows Secrets newsletter <<http://windowssecrets.com/>>: "Everybody's Event Viewer has red and yellow flags. Check yours right now and you'll see them:
- Windows XP: Click Start, Control Panel, Performance and Maintenance, Administrative Tools; then double-click Computer Management.
- Vista: Do the same, except for the final step. Double-click Event Viewer instead.
- Win7: Click Start, type Event, click Event Viewer.

On the left of the Event Viewer window, expand the Windows Logs/System branch. See the ocean of colored flags? They're mostly harmless, although they look alarming - which is why Windows makes it difficult to find them. It's good fodder for a flimflam."

Links to Microsoft Telephone Scam articles/information:
- Microsoft Security & Safety Center - <http://bit.ly/jxOzal>
- Microsoft Answers - Virus and Malware
- <http://bit.ly/P4w9j2>

- InformationWeek Security -
<http://bit.ly/Rp7oAlabc15.com> - <http://bit.ly/RbOedZ>

I've been on the phone with Jim Evans, APCUG Director, when he's been called by one of these scam people. He's using Skype with me so I was able to hear what the person was saying on his regular phone plus Jim's responses. This has happened twice within the last six weeks or so. The last time, he was really leading the caller on but was having trouble understanding what he was saying.

Conclusion, you'd think the scammers would have a better grasp of the English language before they call. The Microsoft telephone-based scams have been around since 2008.



Hotel Wi-Fi networks installing malware

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
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If you are traveling this year, there is a new hacking scheme that you should be aware of.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is warning travelers to watch out for malware that comes through hotel Internet connections.

Here's how it works. When you get to the hotel and connect to the Internet through their wireless or wired Internet connection, you get a pop-up notifying you that you must update your Java in order to have the connection work. When you give your approval, malware is installed on your computer giving the hackers access to your personal information. The malware also serves third-party advertisements to infected computers.

iBahn compromised

Bloomberg has recently reported that Chinese hackers have stolen private data from as many as 760 firms by breaking into the iBahn, a broadband and entertainment service that offered to guests of hotel chains such as Marriott International Inc.

The advice offered by the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (ISC3) includes:

- Carry out all software updates before traveling.
- Checking the author or digital certificate of any prompted update to see if it corresponds to the software vendor.
- Download software updates direct from the vendor's website.

I recommend skipping any software updates that you are offered when traveling and using an encrypted connection for handling email when you are on the road. The way to do this depends on how you access your email when you travel. Gmail is secure since it is encrypted. Other email, however, may not be encrypted. For instance, Time Warner's Road Runner Web

Mail that you can use when you travel encrypts your user name and password, but not your email itself. Other services may be different. You will want to investigate the service you are using.

Check out Mail2Web

If you are not sure if your email is encrypted, you can use a free service called Mail2Web at www.mail2web.com. To use it you simply click on "Secure Login" then put in your email address and password. (Make sure you don't just click "Check Mail" which gives you an unencrypted connection.)

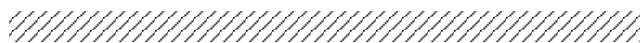
Non-travelers beware, too

If you are not traveling, you still need to keep your guard up. I recently received a very real looking email that was supposed to be from Order-update@amazon.com. Since I often make purchases at Amazon, this piqued my interest. The email said that my Amazon order had been successfully canceled and gave a link to the order in question as well as to Amazon's website. I didn't want any orders cancelled, so I read the entire email.

Then I hovered my mouse over the two links that supposedly went to Amazon and found they went to some other website. (This is a great way to check the links in an email. Just remember that you only put your mouse over the link rather than actually clicking on it).

Remember that if you come across these or any other suspected hacking or phishing schemes, you can report them to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) at www.ic3.gov. This website also has great information and alerts for the latest scams.

You will be amazed by the sheer number of crime schemes that are floating around the Internet. There is everything from Ponzi and Pyramid schemes to Internet Extortion. So check out this website. Just as in real life, you have to be aware of the pitfalls to keep yourself safe. It's always good to follow the advice given by Sergeant Phil Esterhaus in Hill Street Blues. "Let's be careful out there."



Text Messaging or "Texting": Tips and tricks

By Phil Sorrentino, Member, Sarasota PCUG, FL
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If you're under 20, you probably know all of this, and if you're over 60, you probably think you have no need for texting (unless you want to keep in contact with someone who is under 20), so for all of you in between, here goes. Texting is a very interesting, and relatively easy, way to communicate with others, using your cell phone. Texting refers to the exchange of brief text messages between cell phones, over a network.

SMS or Simple Message Service is what provides the ability to send these messages via the cell phone network. Today, all the Wireless carriers provide Texting service, typically at a cost of about 20 cents per text (both incoming and outgoing), unless you have a specific texting plan. Texting plans can include unlimited texting or a specific number of texts per month. Texts, unlike voice calls, cannot be rejected or dismissed; when a text is sent to you, you pay for it, whether you wanted it or not.

Short-hand notation

A text message consists of a series of any of the 26 letters of the alphabet, the 10 numerals, and some special characters (like the space), up to 160 characters long. SMS specifies that text messages are to be 160 characters or less. (You may remember that Twitter, which is based on SMS, limits its "tweets" to 140 characters; this is because Twitter uses 20 characters for addressing of messages.) Most text messages are typically short, and a sort of "short-hand notation" has developed to allow abbreviations or short collections of alpha-numeric characters to convey a longer thought. Some of these may be familiar and some maybe not so much. For a comprehensive list see: <http://www.netlingo.com/acronym.s.php>

Some examples are:

ASAP As soon as possible,	BBFN Bye Bye for now,
BFF Best Friends Forever,	BTW By the way,
CYM Check your mail,	NUFF Enough said,
GF Girl Friend,	C4N Ciao for now,
B4 Before,	GTG Got to go,
IDK I don't know,	ILU I Love You,
IMHO In my humble opinion,	J/K Just kidding,
L8R Later,	M4C Meet for coffee,
OMG Oh my god,	P911 Parent alert,
LOL Laughing out loud,	P2C2E Process too complicated to explain,
C-P Sleepy,	SLAP Sounds like a plan,
TGIF Thank god it's Friday,	TG2BT Too good to be true,
U2 You too.	

Texting can be done from any cell phone that has the ability to send alpha-numeric characters, but if you don't have a phone with a keyboard, texting can be very difficult and tedious.

Tough typing

On a phone with only 16 or so buttons, the buttons have to be pressed sequentially in a certain pattern to get the alpha or special characters, (sending a "C" may require pressing the 2 key 4 times followed by a specific key), which makes sending even some of the very short abbreviations very difficult to accomplish with any speed and accuracy.

On a phone with a keyboard, texting becomes a much simpler activity. Just find the characters on the keyboard

(usually with either of your thumbs), and put together the message, with or without the short-hand notation, making sure to stay within the 160 character limitation. Although texting was originated using only SMS, today texting can handle pictures, video and sound using the MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service). MMS extends the SMS capability to include these multimedia file types. MMS has become the typical way to share pictures and even videos among cell phones.

Today, text messaging is the most widely used mobile data service, others being voice and email. In the United States, in December 2009, there were 286 million US text message subscribers and they sent 152.7 billion text messages per month, for an average of 534 messages per subscriber that month. Another survey found in May 2010 that 72% of U.S. adult cell phone users have sent or received a text message.

80 messages per day

Spurred by the unlimited texting plans offered by carriers like AT&T and Verizon Wireless, American teenagers sent and received an average of 2,272 texts per month in the fourth quarter of 2008, almost 80 messages a day, more than double the average of a year earlier. Text messaging is most often used between cell phone users, as a substitute for voice calls in situations where voice communication is either, impossible, difficult, or not necessary. (In some regions of the world, text messaging is significantly cheaper than placing a phone call to another cell phone; but in general, text messaging is popular for its convenience, despite the low cost of voice calls.

One of the unfortunate down sides to texting is texting while driving. Texting while driving leads to increased distraction behind the wheel. In 2006, a survey with more than 900 teens from over 26 high schools showed that 87% of the students found texting to be “very” or “extremely” distracting. A later study by AAA discovered that 46% of teens admitted to being distracted behind the wheel due to texting.

Please: Never Text While Driving.

Texting even has its own etiquette. One example is: “Keep your message brief.” No one wants to have an entire conversation by texting when a call would be more appropriate. Another example is: “Don’t use all Caps.” Typing a text message in all capital letters will appear as though you are shouting at the recipient, and should be avoided. And a last one “Only send texts to people who you think will appreciate them, otherwise use e-mail, or even voice-mail.” So B4 I go let me say that IMHO texting is GTK NUFF LOL.

This article originally appeared in the July 2012 issue of PC Monitor.

Evolving Technology

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It’s fascinating to me to see how technology is evolving. Who knew that our lives would be transformed so radically in a scant 30 years? My first encounter with a PC was with some friends were early adopters buying Commodores, Atari’s and later IBM PC Juniors for the kids. They seemed to know that PC’s would be something that their children should be acquainted with. As for me I could not put that vision into perspective. It wasn’t until years later that I could fully see the possibilities.

When I got my first computer I tried to find tasks that I could do with it. As I have heard some say the best way to become acquainted with your computer is to find a ‘killer’ application. It could be a game, a productivity project using word processing, a spreadsheet or PowerPoint presentation. It could be anything that requires a computer to complete or possibly just a game such as Solitaire.

I see our CCOKC members coming to grips with the evolution of technology. To some, it is overwhelming, to others it just a challenge. It was a challenge for me as well. I have always enjoyed finding out how things work.

Which brings me to my latest challenge and that is the smartphone. I have a Motorola Bionic, an Android phone that I have decided to make my laptop replacement. I am challenging myself to do as much as I can just using a phone. I have not allowed the screen size to cloud my objective. I think of my phone as being the only device that I have to conduct my daily business whether it is doing my banking, buying online, reading and sending emails etc. It has sort of become a game, which is not only fun but a learning experience.

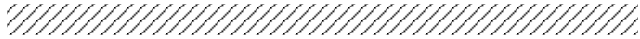
My only limitation to my experience is costs. I try to find apps that are free and are capable of doing the task that I want to do. Fortunately for me my data plan is unlimited so I do not have the constraint of a limited data plan.

If you do not have an unlimited plan, you have to be aware of what type of data plan you have when you use your phone for movies, music and TV. Don’t think in terms of why would you we want to do this, but think of doing it because you can. It might be a onetime experience; the application that you found maybe does not do what you thought it would do.

But don’t let that deter you, think of the confidence that you will gain by just trying to do it. It has almost become habitual that I use my phone’s internet connection to: Find directions to a place or business I have not visited before, using the phones builtin GPS, find out how good the restaurant that I might visit is, or look up the latest information on a product that I plan on buying. I can do all of this on the spot and not wait until I get home.

We all need a personal data assistant, a person (now a device) that can give you information at a moment notice. Your phone can now be that device. So give it a try, you will be surprised what you can do.

The CCOKC has two Mobile Devices Study groups (SIGs); several attendees are now proud owners of their very first smartphone.



Removing Those << Marks From Forwarded Email

from Big Bear Computer Club Newsletter, November 2012

You've just received an e-mail forwarded to you which has all those annoying >> marks at the beginning of each line! To eliminate these marks before forwarding, copy and paste the message to a word processor such as Microsofts WordPad (which comes with all Windows versions).

Here is a sample e-mail message.

```
>> Jake, the rancher, went one day to fix a distant fence. >>The
wind was cold and gusty and the clouds rolled gray and dense.
>>>>
>>As he pounded the last staples in and gathered tools to go,
>>The temperature had fallen, the wind and snow began to
blow.
>>
>>When he finally reached his pickup, he felt a heavy heart.
>>>From the sound of that ignition, he knew it wouldnt start.
>>
```

Copy the message into WordPad (Click on the Start button, Program Files, Accessories) and press the Ctrl + H keys on your keyboard to bring up the Replace box.

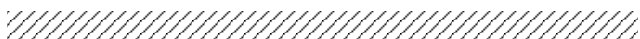
In the Find What box, put > (found on the period key) and leave the Replace with box empty.

Then select Replace All.

All the >> marks will be gone!

Choose Cancel to close the Replace box.

Continue editing your email and forward a Clean document.



New Surveillance-Proof App To Secure Communications Has Governments Nervous

from Under the Computer Hood User Group (UCHUG)
newsletter - November 2012

Lately, Mike Janke has been getting what he calls the "hairy eyeball" from international government agencies. The 44-year-old former Navy SEAL commando, together with two of the world's most renowned cryptographers, was always bound

to ruffle some high-level feathers with his new project - a surveillance resistant communications platform that makes complex encryption so simple your grandma can use it.

This week, after more than two years of preparation, the finished product has hit the market. Named Silent Circle, it is in essence a series of applications that can be used on a mobile device to encrypt communications - text messages, plus voice and video calls. Currently, apps for the iPhone and iPad are available, with versions for Windows, Galaxy, Nexus, and Android in the works. An email service is also soon scheduled to launch.

The encryption is peer to peer, which means that Silent Circle doesn't centrally hold a key that can be used to decrypt people's messages or phone calls. Each phone generates a unique key every time a call is made, then deletes it straight after the call finishes. When sending text messages or images, there is even a "burn" function, which allows you to set a time limit on anything you send to another Silent Circle user - a bit like how "this tape will self destruct" goes down in Mission: Impossible, but without the smoke or fire.

Silent Circle began as an idea Janke had after spending 12 years working for the U.S. military and later as a security contractor. [Read more: Gallagher/Slate/16October2012 Slate = www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense2012/10/silent_circle_mike_janke_s_iphone_app_makes_encryption_easy_governments.single.html

More Info: <http://www.slate.com/>



Downloading from YouTube

from Under the Computer Hood User Group
(UCHuG) - November 2012

It used to be very easy to download videos from Youtube, but now it seems that every web site and application that used to do it can't anymore. Has anyone been able to download from Youtube recently?

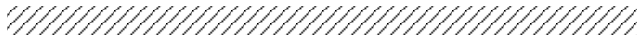
I was going to say use freemake.com's video converter, but, as you say, it has stopped working for youtube. However, if you download the latest version of video converter it then suggests also installing the Freemake video downloader as a separate program. That does work on youtube, I just tried it :-)

"You Tube Download Wizard" add-on for Firefox works like a charm. Puts a download button at bottom of the video. Single click and it starts download. Works well. There are a number of programs that you can use, a simple search will uncover them, some free and some pay. For YouTube I use the FREE version of YTD Video Downloader, very simple program. They have a paid version as well. Both are located here: <http://www.youtubedownloadersite.com/>

I use **KeepVid**<http://www.Keepvid.com>; works like a charm.

I have used Freemake Video Downloader available from <http://www.freemake.com/> for years. I have yet to find a better downloader. I highly recommend it.

For many years, I have used a Firefox plugin called Download Helper which can download video from many different web sites as well as YouTube. Most of the time I download files in their native .flv (Flash video) format and play them in the VLC player. You can most often choose from a variety of resolutions. Often, YouTube offers a choice of MP3 formats as well, which I choose if I know that I will be sharing with others. Whenever you are on any web page with downloadable content, Download Helper notifies you by turning the tiny “pawn shop balls” in its icon from grey to color and animates them a bit. Useful Tool.



Crating is the New Way to Share Files

It's a major pain when large files need to be shared between co-workers or friends, and there are only complicated, five or more step processes to do it. Now you can save your labor and sweat for the gym. A new online service has come to the rescue.

As the website advertises, this new service for sharing large files is “ridiculously easy.” All are invited to come “crate” and experience a painless, simple way of sharing large files.

This service comes in the nick of time since Drop.io, a frequently-used service for sharing, was bought out by Facebook in December 2010. Although the fate of Drop.io under the Facebook logo is unknown, Crating can definitely help you in the meantime or become a permanent substitute solution.

The process is quick and easy. First visit www.letscrate.com and sign on. Your screen will display a list of various crate choices. Select the crate that best fits your needs. Then upload your files and drag them in to the crate. You can pack in all the files you want up to the limit. So click and drag to your heart's content.

There'll be a short uploading period, and then the crate will be stored on a “cloud.” The site will offer you a personal unique URL to share with friends so they can access the file. You can either share individual files or the entire crate. It's that simple.

There are different service levels offered. At the basic level, you don't even have to have an account with the website. You will be limited to a 30 minute time period in which to upload and share your files though. Other options allow you an indefinite amount of time as well as more numbers of crates, so you may prefer to have an actual account.

OPERATING SYSTEM NOTES & TIPS

Should I use sleep, hibernate or shut it down?

by Bill Sheff, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA
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The answer to this depends on who you talk to. Way back when, you shut your system down to prevent burn-in. Then came screensavers. With screensavers and less burn-in on the LCD screens it is no longer an issue. Before I put in my two cents worth, let's pin down these terms once more.

When a computer goes into sleep or standby mode, it shuts off its display screen, video card, CPU and hard drive, so processes like anti-virus scans won't run. It stores the computer's last state (software opened on the desktop, etc.,) to the RAM, and so requires a small amount of electricity (called a “trickle charge”) to maintain that.

Since RAM is transient memory, once the computer shuts down completely the computer's current state is lost, including any unsaved information. So a word to the wise, SAVE before you leave.

The advantage to sleep mode is that, when you “wake” your computer, it comes back to its current state very quickly - almost instantly. So if you're only going to be away from it a couple hours, this is quite convenient.

In hibernation mode, the computer writes everything from the computer's RAM, including its current state, to the hard drive and then shuts down, so it functionally uses no power while in hibernation. Once the computer is brought out of hibernation, it goes straight to the computer's current state, including all open programs.

Although this takes less time than a full shutdown and start-up, it does take longer than simply waking it up from sleep, although it uses no power when hibernating, as opposed to little when asleep. Again, no programs or scans will run while a computer is hibernating.

Power off is, duh! Off. The main reason for shutting your PC down is, of course, power savings. The amount of money that it takes to run a PC depends on how many watts you're actually using to run your PC (this can be determined by buying a Kill-a-watt or similar device for about \$30), and how much you're being charged by your electric company per kilowatt hour. Most estimates seem to run about ten to twenty dollars per month, running 24 hours per day.

There's also the question of stress on your computer components. Whereas having it on is harder on your compo-

nents than having it off, the process of shutting down and starting up your PC puts more stress on these components than simply leaving them on.

So what it comes down to is personal preference. In my case, I leave my computer on at night to run virus scans, hard drive scans and defragging. The monitor is pretty much off by itself. If you do leave your computer on overnight, it's a good idea to do a restart in the morning. This allows your computer to clear any information in the memory cache and in your RAM and allows your computer to run more quickly.

This article appeared in the July 2012 issue of LVCG Journal.

Changing which Windows 7 programs automatically launch

The Tip Corner By Bill Sheff, Novice SIG Coordinator,
Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA
www.lvcg.org - nsheff (at) aol.com

When you connect a device or media to your computer (digital cameras, phones, DVDs, CDs, etc.) are you happy with the choices your computer gives you? For example, when you insert an audio CD, you may not want iTunes to load it - maybe you would rather import through Windows Media Player. And with a DVD should it play automatically, just like your regular family room DVD player?

Here is how to make your media do exactly what you expect it to do. Click Start and in the Search Box type, AutoPlay and hit Enter. A window will pop up. Now simply go down the list and use the provided drop-down menus to choose what each media type does when its inserted into your computer. When you are done, press Save. Thats all there is to it. If for any reason you want to go back to the default Windows 7 settings, hit the Reset all defaults button at the bottom.

Capitalization

Should you capitalize the word "Internet"? What about "e-mail"? Do you use a hyphen or not? Ever wondered about that? Here is the answer: The Internet is actually considered to be a proper noun and in the English language, most proper nouns are capitalized. So, in short, the word Internet should always begin with a capital letter. If you havent been using a capital, dont worry, youre not the only one. As far as the term e-mail goes, it is accepted with and without a hyphen. However, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the correct spelling is actually e-mail, with a hyphen. Why? Because the word e-mail is composed of two different words (electronic and mail), so the hyphen helps separate them for a more technical spelling. Who knew? Now, go on and spread the word.

What is 'pinning' and how do I do it?

By Bill Sheff, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA
www.lvcg.org nsheff (at) aol.com

"Pinning" is keeping items within a window in the same place for easy access. Programs, applications, web sites, etc. can all be "Pinned." For Example: The Windows Start Menu is divided into two sections. The top half of the menu is reserved for pinned items. Since I use Excel and Word almost every day, I keep them pinned, making them accessible at the click of a mouse at any time.

How does one do this? Simply right-click on an icon on your desktop and choose "Pin to Start Menu." That's it.

The bottom section of the Start Menu is reserved for frequently used programs. Though this may sound the same as a pinned menu, the items on the list change dynamically based on what I've been apt to do lately. So if I've been using the calculator a lot, its icon will show up, but if I stop using it for a while and make use of something else, that icon will show up.

What happened to Normal View in Word 2007 and 2010?

If you're using either Word 2007 or 2010 and preferred working in the Normal view, then you're probably wondering what happened to it. If you went to the View tab of the Ribbon it is not there. Well, it was not deleted. They just renamed it Draft view. Now all those page separations are gone. Unfortunately when you reopen the file it again opens in the Print Layout view.

So how do we tame Microsoft to open in the Draft view every time? Click on File and choose Options then Advanced on the left. On the right scroll all the way down to the General section. Locate and select the "Allow opening a document in Draft view" option. Click OK. When you open a file that you saved in Draft view it will still be in Draft view.

Shift+Space Browser Navigation

Here is a way to make navigating pages in your web browser a little easier. Instead of using the Page Up and Page Down keys, you achieve the same results by pressing your Space Bar to go a page down and pressing Shift+Space to go a page up.

This article appeared in the July 2012 issue of LVCG Journal

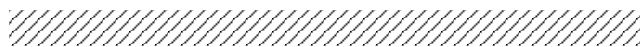
Windows 7 Menus in Windows 8 from Danbury Area Computer Society Q & A November 2012

Q - Is there a way to get the traditional start menu in Windows 8?

A - Of course! Many developers have produced programs that

give you a start button and pop-up menu. With the caveat that I have tried only one of these, here are some menu programs and a registry hack. The programs attempt to add a start menu on top of the Metro interface. Some provide additional fancy features and tweaks. Many of these were developed and tested on the preview editions of Win8, so they may, or may not, work as planned on the retail version.

1. Registry Tweak <<http://geekprison.com/2345-how-get-windows-7-start-menu-windows-8-registry-tweak/>> disables Metro interface and returns the menu.
2. Windows Start Menu Vistart 8 <<http://leesoft.com/vistart/>> works with Win7, Vista and XP as well as Win8.
3. Stardock Start8 <<http://www.stardock.com/products/start8/>> Another start menu program
4. Power 8 - <<https://code.google.com/p/power8/>> from Kiev. You might want to try this in a throwaway installation.
5. Pokki - <<http://www.pokki.com>> found this in a David Pogue column on Win8 and tried it using the Consumer Preview edition; it worked well but I will try others.



Wiping Hard Disk Data VS. Drilling Holes...

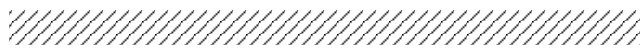
from Under the Computer Hood User Group (UPCHUG)
November 2012

To wipe a hard drive well and fully, I use Darik's Boot And Nuke. Free from DBAN.

It's an ISO, that is, a CD image file you burn to a CD (double click on the ISO file after downloading, and your CD burning software should come up in the correct setup to burn the image to the CD, you don't want to just UCHUG DRIVE LIGHT Page 11 of 17 November 2012 burn the file itself to a CD). Then boot the CD on the system you want to wipe.

Various wipe levels, including up to DOD standards.

I recommend removing any/all disks you do not want wiped to ensure you don't accidentally wipe something you want to keep.



Secure Delete For Files Already Deleted

from Under the Computer Hood User Group (UPCHUG)
November 2012

Most secure delete programs have an option to "cleanse" all the free space on a drive, including space for previously deleted files. The program I use is *sDelete.exe*, a free program you can download. It works from the command prompt. To

cleanse the C: drive, enter the following at command prompt:
sdelete -p 3 -z C:

In this example the -p 3 switch will cause the program to make three passes (overwrite the data three times). You can use as many passes as you want.

Note: The more passes you specify increases the time it takes. To cleanse a large drive can take a long time. To get a list of other sdelete options, enter the following at the prompt:

sdelete !?

Other free downloadable secure delete programs are Eraser, BCWipe, KillDisk, SureDelete, and TDEL.

TOGGLE Editor's Note:

I have used BCWipe for years. It was once used by DoD.



GENERAL INTEREST

Some basics about digital photography

Tech Column By Dick Maybach
n2nd [at] charter.net
BCUG Bytes December 2012

As you probably know, a digital camera is far more complex than its small size indicates. Indeed, some models have multiple processors to handle the demands of image processing, especially when making movies and photo sequences.

If you were to look at most digital camera sensors under a microscope, you would see something like the figure below, although with many more colored squares (typically well over a million), one for each pixel.

This is an array of filters, called a Bayer filter array, after the Kodak engineer who invented it. The array covers the sensor, with the result that about half the pixels are sensitive only to light in the green portion of the spectrum, a quarter are sensitive to red, and a quarter to blue.

Typically, the camera records the output of each pixel as a 12-bit word. The camera's processor converts this data so that each pixel is presented as three 8-bit bytes, one each of red, green, and blue, using data from several adjacent pixels.

Most often, it then compresses the information into a JPEG image to save space on your memory card. This compression technique is lossy; that is, the result won't be quite as sharp as the original, but for pictures viewed on a computer screen or as reasonably-sized prints you won't see the loss. If you just upload your photos to your PC or make prints, you are

missing much of the fun of photography, and your pictures won't be nearly as good as they could be. If you use a real camera (as opposed to one in a cell phone), it most likely came with a CD that has digital darkroom software. With this you can correct many imperfections, such as:

- cropping to improve the composition or to remove stray heads, arms, signs and such at the edges,
- straightening to eliminate a tilt,
- making the image brighter, and
- correcting the color or making the colors more vibrant.

Even if your camera is a cell phone, you can use a free program, such as Picasa, available from <http://picasa.google.com/>, to do the same. Windows 7 doesn't include a photo editor, but you can download MS Photo Gallery and Movie Maker from <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-live/photo-gallery-get-started>.

(This photo editor is part of Windows Essentials, which includes instant messaging, mail, blog composing, and Internet family safety programs, but you can download only what you need.

Apple's iPhoto, once free [and still bundled on all new Macs] but now sold on the Mac App and iOS App stores, both catalogs and lets you edit images. And there are several Linux-based photo editors and cataloguers, like Shotwell.) These programs also help you organize your photo collection and create Web albums. They are easy to use, provide a good way to get started, and many people will decide they need go no further.

The above programs provide only basic retouching. You can do much more with software than ranges from inexpensive (Adobe Photoshop Elements, Corel Paintshop Pro) to free (GIMP). However, all these involve a significant learning curve, and you will need to study a good book to avoid endless frustration. You can no more learn effective digital photo retouching by trial and error than you can learn effective writing by typing randomly and looking at the resulting spell-check and grammar-check messages.

We have been discussing photo retouching, where you work with (usually) JPEG files. There is another process, developing, which transforms the raw data from the camera's sensor to a JPEG file. This conversion loses information and results in lower dynamic range and lower resolution. Typically, the raw data captures two stops of additional brightness range than exists in the JPEG file. More expensive cameras can store raw images [think of these as akin to digital negatives] on memory cards, in addition to or in place of JPEG ones. If you properly develop a raw image, the increased dynamic range can significantly improve back-lit images and ones with strong shadows.

Many photo-editing programs let you work with raw images to recover portions of pictures that would otherwise produce pure blacks or pure whites if blindly converted to JPEG. Working with raw data also lets you accurately correct color casts due to incorrect white balance and do a better job of reducing noise.

The development process that occurs in many cameras corrects for the camera's imperfections, such as distortion, aberration, and vignetting. You must be careful to include the same corrections if you develop outside the camera. Most likely, these corrections are made in the software that came with your camera, but you will have to enable it correctly if you use third-party software. My approach is to develop the pictures with my camera manufacturer's software, save the results in a format that is not compressed, retouch with GIMP, and save as a JPEG file.

The developing situation is a bit muddled, as many cameras process the data before storing it in a raw file, typically to correct for optical imperfections. (Perhaps we should call the result a "rare" rather than a "raw" file.) Unfortunately, they haven't shared with the public the extent to which they do this.

An advantage of using the camera manufacturer's software to process raw files is that it often allows you to add special effects after you take the picture. You can concentrate on taking pictures and decide later if you want to use for example, enhanced colors, compensate the exposure, or make a black-and-white image. Because the subject is so complex, I haven't tried to make this a how-to-do-it article. Rather, I hope to encourage you to try digital photo editing. Getting started is easy, and the results are rewarding, even with the most basic programs. You can go as far as your interest takes you.



Free Windows Utility Lowers Your Printing Costs

Big Bear Computer Club Bearly Bytes November, 2012
From CNET.com

Tired of burning through pricey ink and toner cartridges? PretonSaver Home promises to cut these consumable costs by up to 70 percent. Best of all, it's free. (Note: You can use the previous link to download the program, but click here to go to Preton's site and register for the activation code.)

PretonSaver Home, which conserves ink and toner, originally cost as much as \$40, but now you can get a free license for home use. How much ink or toner do you want to save? Just raise or lower PretonSaver Home's sliders accordingly.

This Windows-only utility works its ink-saving magic by removing overlapping pixels (of which there are many, appar-

ently) from the printed page, thus reducing ink consumption. And it's compatible with pretty much all programs and printers.

But does it work? And, more importantly, does it work better than your printer's own Draft mode, which ultimately accomplishes the same thing?

I started by printing a few "mixed" Web pages (containing both text and graphics) on my laser printer. The good news: The PretonSaver Home-powered pages looked virtually indistinguishable from the regular ones, despite the driver's claim that I'd used 13 percent less ink.

On the other hand, the printer's own "toner saver" mode did just as well (though without any quantifiable savings).

With a color inkjet, the PretonSaver and non-PretonSaver pages were again nearly identical unless you looked really closely.

When I switched to photos, however, the PretonSaver images looked a bit lighter, but no less sharp. Very good overall, very passable. The inkjet's economy mode produced very poor results in comparison.

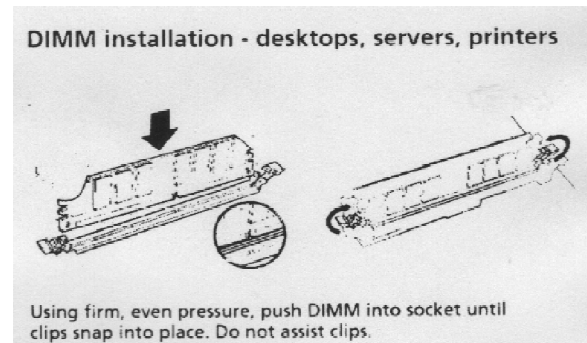
I really like the PretonSaver driver's instantly calculated savings, slider-adjustable level of "savings aggressiveness," detailed reports, and other interesting data. Whether it's as accurate as it claims, that's tough to say. Time will tell.

You'll need Windows XP, Vista, or 7 to run it; Preton offers both 32- and 64-bit versions.

For a typical desktop computer, once you open the case, all you do is insert one or two chips in their slots. This takes about 5 minutes.

I suggest that we have a workshop where you actually insert a memory chip into one of my computers. My guess is that you will find it so easy that you will feel confident about adding RAM to your computer.

Here is drawing of what you do (that really is all it takes).



I can have 1 old computer for every 4 people at a typical computer meeting. Everyone can have a go at it and be done before the coffee break. Plenty of time for a presentation.

I suggest you go to <http://www.crucial.com/systemscanner/> then select download and run their System Scanner. This will tell you exactly how much memory you have, which slots are used and what you type of memory you need. Bring that information to the workshop for individual advice. (They also try to sell you memory chips - but what did you expect for free info? - TOGGLE ed.)

HARDWARE NOTES & TIPS

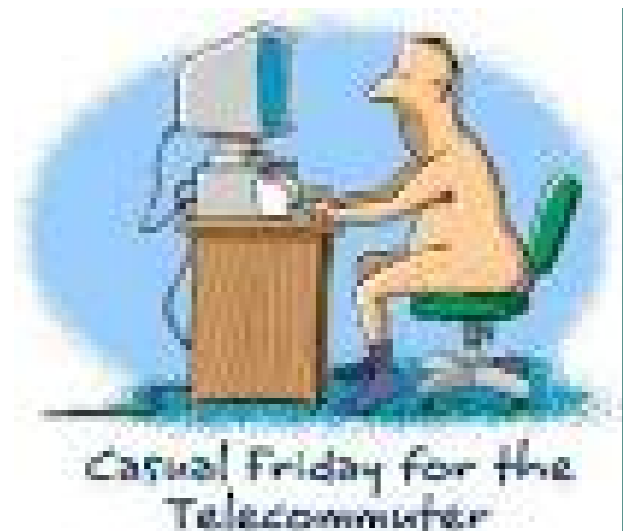
Why would you want more memory in your computer?

by Forrest Meiere

The most common cause of computers running more slowly than they used to is insufficient memory. Many computer experts recommend at least 2 GB of RAM (Random Access Memory) but no more than 3 GB for the average user. Older computers typically have 1 GB or less.

Memory is cheap; my guess is about \$15 per GB.

The problem most people have is fear. Installing memory involves opening the computer case and "doing something inside" That can be scary if you have never looked inside a computer.



Help Lines

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

SOFTWAREHELP	AdvisorNo.
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

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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 MEETING

When: **Mon 14 Jan 2013 -7:00 PM**
Where: SE Tacoma Community Centre
1614 99th Street E.
Tacoma, Washington

From I-5 take Exit 127 (Hwy 512) to Portland Ave., north on Portland to 99th, left over tracks. Building is on south side.

Future Dates: 2nd Monday of Month

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

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How To get To The Meeting

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



TOGGLE

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

Change Service Requested

PROGRAMS

This Month's Meeting

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

Program Presentation

None announced at press time.