

COMPUTER NEWS



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Fun Site: Browser Statistics

Schools are a pretty good reflection of technology use as a whole. This site looks at schools and tells you which browsers and operating systems schools are using, and identifies and analyzes usage trends.

Browser Statistics can be found at http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/browsers_stats.asp.

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Browser **Statistics**

The Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group will meet Wednesday, September 19th, 7:00-9:00 P.M.

At the Napa Senior Activity Center,
1500 Jefferson Street, Napa, California



The meeting begins with Random Access, an open-floor question-and-answer period during which attendees can ask questions about computers and computer-related problems and receive helpful information from other meeting attendees. Questions may be submitted before the meeting by emailing them to Random Access moderator **Jerry Brown**

at Questions@nvpcug.org.



The presenter for the September 19th, 2012 meeting will be Ron Dack. How many times have you said to yourself "It must be lost in the ethernet".

Not saying that it is there, but Ron will tell us about the Ultimate Archive Site. You'd be surprised at the secrets this archive holds. If you have an idea or questions regarding Programs, email **Ken Manfree** at Programs@nvpcug.org.

Term From Smart Computing: ubiquity

A quality attributed to anything that seems to be everywhere at all times. Often used in technology circles to describe technologies in widespread use. Some may say mobile phones, for instance, are ubiquitous.

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Could you use some practical information that would help you make better use of your computer? Come to this meeting! Guests are always welcome. Admission is always free.

Interested in becoming a member? See page 18 for application information.

Southwest Technology and Computer Conference - Saturday

By Beth Pickering, member of the Napa Valley Personal Computer User's Group,
www.nvpcug.org, bethpick@emailx.net

Last month I forgot to mention the door prizes. There are always a lot of them, and everybody is automatically entered. The drawing used to happen on Sunday, but since the conference has gotten so big, there are drawings at every meal. You have to be present to win. The winning names are put in a special pile until everyone has won once., then it starts all over again. All prizes are given away. Some years people got 3, but this year there was a shortage and some people missed out.

Saturday morning arrived. My little toe was swollen and I couldn't wear my shoes. Thank God I took my sandals. Rick Edwards sat at our table for breakfast. Chatting with Rick is always interesting and fun, but it wasn't as special as last night.



8 MegaPixels
Film Converter,
Starting From:
\$79.99

Wolverine Data (www.wolverinedata.com) provided a full breakfast buffet followed with a presentation by their President **Matt Mardini**. Wolverine has a number of very interesting products. I already have a hand held scanner, and added how easy it works to the discussion period. They also have external hard drives, PicPacs (portable picture back up), speakers, and film to digital image converters...more about that later. Door prizes were drawn and everyone was handed a certificate as we exited.



14 MegaPixels Photos &
Film Digitizer, Starting
From: \$159.99

There was a short 15 min. break before the morning sessions began.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS & MAC GROUP

In SIG meetings you can learn about a subject in greater detail than is feasible at NVPCUG general meetings. SIG meetings are open to everyone. Meeting times and locations occasionally change, so for current meeting information, see our Web site, www.nvpcug.org, or contact the SIG leaders.

Investors SIG

Meets: Monthly, second Monday
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Jerry Brown's home,
23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa

Leader: Jerry Brown
(707) 254-9607
bqandjbb@sbcglobal.net

Napa Valley Mac User Group

Meets: Monthly, second Thursday
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Napa Senior Activity Center
1500 Jefferson St., Napa

Facilitator: Don Crandall
(707) 322-0844
ronrogersnapamug@gmail.com

From 9:30 to 10:30 I went to "How to Navigate the Ever Changing Landscape of Technology" by Abby Stokes. She has a new edition of her book "Is This Thing On" and talked about smart phones, net books (keyboards but no disk drives), readers (Barnes & Nobles' Nook, Sony's Reader, and Amazon's Kindle), Wi-Fi, and Mi-Fi.



After another 15 min. break, I joined Jim's Evans' session on "Facebook Timeline". Facebook is making their site more like a digital scrapbook in hopes people won't move to other social networking sites. Well they are giving people some transition time, using Timeline will become mandatory. He also gave some good pointers on using Facebook, including:

1. Don't give Facebook access to your address book.
2. Use privacy settings to restrict who can see your posts.
3. Have Facebook notify you when your account is logged into.

Another short break and it was time for lunch. Each meal includes a presentation by the sponsor. Microsoft's **Scott Newman** gave us a demonstration of what Windows 8 will be able to do. You can watch the video at www.theswcc.org under Presentations. It ended with everyone being called up by table for small goodies and more of the door prize drawings. As we exited for a short break, we got another certificate.



The first afternoon session had four choices I was very interested in. My dilemma was solved when I was asked to introduce Gene Barlow for his session on "How to Succeed at Close-up Photography". He showed us pictures he had taken while giving us tips on what to do. Of the different types of magnification he felt using an macro lens was the best way to go. Some of his tips were:

Southwest cont. on page 4

Napa Valley Personal Computer Users Group Contact Information

Officers for 2011

Board of Directors

President	Jim Gray	unlisted	President@nvpcug.org
Vice President	Ron Dack	unlisted	VicePresident@nvpcug.org
	Julie Jerome	224-6620	second-Vice-President@nvpcug.org
Secretary	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Secretary@nvpcug.org
Treasurer	Roy Wagner	253-2721	Treasurer@nvpcug.org
Other Directors:	Susy Ball, Bernhard Krevet, Dick Peterson, Bob Simmerman, Tom Uboldi, Mel Cohen, Ron Rogers and Jerry Brown		

Appointed Positions

Computer Tutor Coordinator	Jeff Solomon	553-2114	Tutor@nvpcug.org
Facility Arrangements Coordinator	Dianne Prior	252-1506	Facility@nvpcug.org
Greeter Coordinator	Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Greeter2@nvpcug.org
	<i>needs an Assistant</i>		
Membership Director	Bob Simmerman	259-6113	Membership@nvpcug.org
Newsletter Editor	Susy Ball	337-3998	Editor@nvpcug.org
Product Review CoCoordinator	Susy Ball	337-3998	Reviews@nvpcug.org
	Marcia Waddell	252-2060	Reviews2@nvpcug.org
Programs Director	Ken Manfree	707-224-3722	Programs@nvpcug.org
	Bernhard Krevet-asst.	(unlisted)	Programs@nvpcug.org
Publicity Director	Mel Cohen	unlisted	Publicity@nvpcug.org
Random Access Moderator	Jerry Brown	254-9607	Questions@nvpcug.org
Webmaster	Ron Dack	unlisted	Webmaster@nvpcug.org
	<i>needs an Assistant</i>		

(All telephone numbers are in Area Code 707)

NVPCUG General Meetings
Held the third Wednesday of each month, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Napa Senior Activity Center,
1500 Jefferson Street, Napa

NVPCUG Computer News

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Southwest cont. from page 2

1. Slow down your shutter speed.
2. With wind problems-put a box around your subject.
3. Get a good tripod with a removable center post.



Break time-and boy did I need it. So did a lot of other people. The restroom was small and one toilet wasn't working, so by the time I got through the next session had already started. I planned to go to Orv Beach's session on Linux, but I have always had trouble walking into a meeting late. I did have a report with a deadline to write and send in, so I decided to use the cybercafe. I got the report done, but the last afternoon session had already started. Well, there were other things I could do, so I stayed and played the computer until just before dinner.



Saturday dinner is always a yummy Mexican buffet, surrounded by the Vendor Expo.

This year the Expo started before dinner was served, which gave us a lot more time to browse the vendor tables. There are goodies to pick up, knowledgeable people to talk to, and conference only discounts to take advantage of. This is where you can get that definitive answer, or find out if that software will really do what you need it to. I have some old slides and negatives that I want to digitalize, so I became the proud owner of Wolverine's Film to Digital Image Converter. They had a larger one that would also do up to 8 x 10" pictures, but the small one was just right for my needs. There were many tables and lots of vendors. Gene Barlow has been to every conference, Orv Beach did Linux installs, and Abby



Stokes brought the new version of her book. Among the companies I talked to were Vipre, Ai Squared, iolo, Topaz, Acoustica, Dogwaffle, Avast, SendOutCards, and Applian. At the end of the evening the vendors were formerly introduced, and names were drawn for the prizes they brought. The major raffle, with prizes like a new computer, was held.

Susy and I spent some socializing time in the hospitality room, then headed for bed.

There is one more day, and you will hear about it next month. *



PicPac 160GB to 500GB
The Perfect Companion to any Digital Camera backup thousands of photos or videos without a computer built-in high speed memory card reader, Starting at : \$149.99



(Pro-Series) The Twin Rollers Handheld Personal Copier, Reg. Price: \$129.95



DOWNLOAD SCANS DIRECT TO YOUR IPAD



NVPCUG Calendar

Sept 19	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, + A
Oct 8	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting + C
Oct 11	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Napa Valley Mac User Group + A
Oct 17	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, + A
Nov 3	10:00-11:30 am.	Board of Directors meeting + E
Nov 8	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Napa Valley Mac User Group + A
Nov 12	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting + C
Nov 21	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, + A
Dec 10	5:30-7:30 p.m.	Investors SIG meeting + C
Dec 13	6:30-8:30 p.m.	Napa Valley Mac User Group + A
Dec 19	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, + A
Jan 16	7:00-9:00 p.m.	NVPCUG General Meeting, + A

Meeting Locations

- A** - Napa Senior Activity Center, 1500 Jefferson Street, Napa
- B** - Piner's Nursing Home, 1800 Pueblo Ave., Napa
- C** - Jerry Brown's home, 23 Skipping Rock Way, Napa
- D** - Peterson's Family Christmas Tree Farm, 1120 Darms Lane, Napa
- E** - Napa Senior Activity Complex, 1524 Jefferson Street, Napa

I'm thinking about getting a tablet computer

Bill Armstrong, Treasurer, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA

May 2012 issue, LVCG Journal, www.lvcg.org, armstrong_bill@yahoo.com

Question:

I am THINKING about getting one of these tablet computers, but have oodles of questions so I thought I'd start here (rather than bugging sales people until I know a bit more).

Are there any additional costs to use for internet access. (i.e. like a cell phone on a per minute plan)? Are "apps" part of the deal using a tablet (we are not into smart phones either at this point)? Is there a cost to use an App (other than cost to download if it was not free) ... such as checking mail, weather, interactive games? Would I be able to get my e-mail? One I am looking at mentions Gmail ... which I do not have? How do I get virus (etc.) protection? How secure using a wireless hot spot?

Thanks, *Dave*

Answer:

I do not have a tablet, but I do have a smart phone (Android). Internet access through the cellular network requires a monthly access fee with a carrier, so yes, there is a continuing cost. That is why most of the tablets sold are Wi-Fi (not cellular). The Wi-Fi only tablets are less expensive to purchase initially (since they do not have the circuitry for cellular communications). My plan with Verizon to get internet on my phone costs an extra \$30⁰⁰ per month (over the cost of the cell phone plan for voice phone calls).

Apps are elective for you. I have some, but not a huge number. They give me weather info, stock market info, gasoline prices locally, movie listings, etc. Apps come in both free and paid versions. Once acquired, there is usually no additional cost to use them, forever. Most apps that require a fee up front are low cost, such as \$0⁹⁹ up to \$3⁰⁰ or maybe even \$5⁰⁰. Some, I guess, are more expensive, but I have never paid for the expensive ones.

If you have Wi-Fi at home, a tablet will work on the Wi-Fi network very nicely. That is how most people use them. When you go out around town, you will find many businesses offer free Wi-Fi. I used the free Wi-Fi at Panera Bread today in Whitehall. You should be able to get your email when connected to the Internet over Wi-Fi. I'll bet your email service has a method of retrieving your email over the web.

Virus protection is available for the operating systems (OS) that tablets run. I have such a program for my smart phone, for which I paid. It's a good idea to have one. The

app store for your tablet's OS will offer many. Just search for anti-virus. Wireless hotspots (public Wi-Fi) are not secure. Period. That being said, I use them all the time. I just don't do any banking or money or credit card transactions. I wait until I am home, on my password protected Wi-Fi system.

Be sure to view a few screen sizes, to see what is good for you. The iPad is about 10.1 inches (measured diagonally), and many consider that size to be ideal for them. Other popular sizes are 7.7 and 7.0 inches, and 5 inches. View a website or two to see how they look.

My smart phone is large for a phone, about 4.65 inches. It's small but usable for viewing a website. I have to use a two-finger spreading action on the screen to enlarge the view, so I can read it easily. If using the Android OS, I recommend a tablet that uses Android 4.0 or later (called Ice Cream Sandwich or ICS). This OS makes scrolling and making the view larger/smaller very easy and intuitive and smooth.

I use my phone for getting email, viewing websites, checking the weather, checking my calendar (where I put all my appointments and "to do" list), checking facts on Wikipedia, getting news, reading tech articles, getting stock market info, etc.

Bill

Fun Site: FunBrain.com

Your kids are probably looking forward to the holiday break, but there are still tests to take and homework to finish. If you and your kids find yourself at your wits' end trying to figure out those complex math problems, or if you'd just like to see your kids playing some constructive computer games, check out FunBrain.com. This Web site allows your kids to get help on their homework, play fun learning games, and read about what other kids are interested in. Check out this site over the holidays, and you and your kids will be amazed at what it offers. Funbrain was created for kids ages preschool through grade 8

FunBrain.com can be found at <http://www.funbrain.com/>

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Tablet or Laptop, a Popular Question

...and “Cool App Reviews

By Greg West, Advisor, Region 6 and International; Webmaster: Sarnia Computer User's Group, www.scug.ca, gwest@apcug.org

Unless you are a “hard core” computer gamer, you can now officially say goodbye to the laptop.

The day of computer frustration is coming to an end. The answer to pulling your hair out as you are trying to figure out why the laptop is so hard to use is called: “touch pads”.

I recall clearly, back on the APCUG/FAPCUG technology cruise this past January where 400 plus geeks road the seas and clicked on computers in various seminars. Wait, that's not correct. It wasn't computers these everyday people were using. No, it was touch screen devices. Mostly iPads I must admit. This too is strange as the group was 99.9% Windows users. The average age in the 400 plus crowd was, shall I say, more than 50+. Most of them said they cannot believe the difference and ease when they switched from a laptop or desktop to a tablet.

Most people on the tech cruise, who recently bought a tablet and still owned a laptop/desktop computer, said that they “hardly ever use their computer anymore.” The hot topic on the ship was the app. People were constantly sharing newfound apps for their tablets.

So what makes these tablets so popular? Price, ease of use, two click downloads for software, portability, and low price is enticing laptop/desktop are just a few of the factors enticing people to switch. Here are some tips when shopping for a tablet:

1. Test drive several. Ask friends who own them what they suggest. Do online searches for reviews.
2. Decide what exactly you are going to use it for then decide on the size. I wouldn't worry too much about the hard drive size as most of what we do on computer is heading to the cloud and soon, you won't need software programs for your devices.
3. Make sure the tablet of choice as an USB slot for thumb drives, cameras, and other such devices. ITworld.com suggests “Decide on the operating system. The three main choices these days are iOS, Android or Blackberry Tablet OS. Do a bit of research on all three and pick the one that will work the best for you.”

One final word...Most people will tell you once they bought a tablet their other computers became lonely. Just ask anyone who owns a tablet and they'll tell you they “hardly use” their computers anymore because the tablet is “so much easier to use and less hassle.”

Forester.com researchers predict “Tablets will cannibalize netbooks, and outselling them starting in 2012. In 2015, 23% of all PCs sold to consumers in Happy hunting. Oh yes, one more thing. The tablet to watch is Samsung, once the amazing new Windows 8 “Surface” hits the streets. Then you will have a tough decision for sure: Do I want to be a “Mac or a PC” lol. Have fun!

Cool App Reviews...”AppZilla 2” won the App of the year award in 2011.

I finally broke down and bought an app for my iPhone, AppZilla 2, it nicely slid onto my iPad after syncing with my iCloud (fodder for a future article on iCloud). Ninety-nine cents is a fair price to pay for an app that houses 120 apps with just one click. Some of the Apps within this App included: Google software, Apple reports this app “surpasses 3 million downloads to date!” AppZilla 2 works on the iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. Sorry droid users you only get 40 Apps right now!

With 150 apps in one App, it will take some time to test drive them all. YES, you heard correctly, one software application houses 150 software applications. Some are kinda corny but still fun. As a Google user of Docs, now called Google Drive, Gmail and many of Google's software program, I like the way this app has corralled all the Google products for ease of use. They call this the “utility” app and rightfully so, as there are levels, app for flashlight mode on your phone, path finder so you never get lost, night vision, password keeper, parking meter reminder with alarm, police scanner for many cities, and many more I haven't tried but sure will. I give this app a 10+. For a listing of all the 150 Apps you can go here: <http://fossilsoftware.com/>

Greg writes a regular monthly magazine tech column about “Anything Tech” and new Apps. This article was previously published and is now free to distribute. *



Date & Time

Sometime when you're working hard and fast, you just want a shortcut to put in mundane information, such as the date and time. In Microsoft Excel, you can do just that by pressing CTRL-; (semicolon) to insert the current date or CTRL-SHIFT-; to insert the current time.

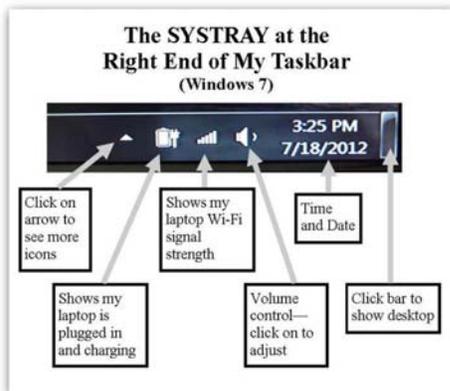
Note: Be sure your computer's date and time are correctly set before you do this.

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The System Tray Icons

Jim Cerny, Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida, September 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor, www.spcug.org, jimcerny123@gmail.com

On all editions of Windows, if you look at the lower right corner of your desktop computer screen – next to the clock with the time – you will see some small icons. Have you ever wondered what those icons are and why they are there? Well, this area of the Desktop is called the “System Tray” (or “systray”) and, basically, this area on your taskbar is showing what programs are started when your computer is turned on. Here is a sample shot of my Systray:



Normally you would not change the icons in this area by deleting them or adding new ones. New icons are added here automatically when you install programs on your computer that are intended to be running “in the background” all the time. But there are a few basic things about these little icons that are very helpful to know.

The Clock

The time and date for your computer should be correct, if not you can change the time and date by left-clicking your mouse on the current time and this will open small window in which you can set your clock and date. Normally you will only have to do this once because it will automatically adjust for daylight savings time. Even when your computer is unplugged, turned off, or if your laptop has no battery power left, the clock is probably still running with its own tiny power supply. The clock is essential to all computer functions because everything you do is recorded with the date and time. If you save a new file, for example, the date and time is recorded with the file.

The Volume Control

This little icon looks like a side view of a speaker. If you “hover” your mouse on that icon it will show you the percent volume level. Click on the icon to open the slide volume control. If you have a desktop computer then you probably also have a set of two external speakers (plugged into a wall outlet) that have their own “on/off” switch and their own volume control. But your external speakers can only project the volume given to them from your computer.

So, if you have external speakers, adjust the volume control on your computer to maximum and then use the controls on the external speakers. If you have a laptop (and do not have external speakers connected to it) then you click on this icon to change the volume. Many laptops have a small wheel or buttons on the keyboard to also control the volume. Check your laptop’s manual. If you do have a laptop and want to enjoy beautiful sound for music or movies, a set of external speakers is a great idea.

Your Virus Protection

You should have an active virus protection program running on your computer. If you do you will see an icon in this area which represents this program. Naturally your virus protection program should always be running whenever you start your computer. Click on its icon here to open a window to work with your anti-virus program.

The Laptop Icons

The systray also shows icons about your laptop’s power supply. For example, if my laptop is connected to a wall outlet, I see an icon with a plug symbol. If my laptop is running on battery, I see a battery symbol with a percentage of battery power level remaining.

Wireless Signal Strength Level

Since your laptop connects without wires to the internet in your home (or at McDonald’s or other places) you should have a “bar indicator” icon here that shows the strength of the wireless (Wi-Fi) signal. The more bars the stronger the signal. “Hovering” the mouse on this icon will show you the name of the network you are using. Click on it to see a list of all connections available from which you can select. Naturally you would want to use the connection with the strongest signal, but remember that many wireless networks are secured and require a password to use.

Perhaps there are more icons in this area than can fit into this part of the Taskbar – if so there will be a small triangle “arrowhead” for you to click on to see all the icons. Just hover your mouse over an icon to see a small text box description. If you don’t know what an icon is for, jot down the description and enter that text into Google and find out. You can also Google “systray icons” and get more information.

Remember that the icons you see in your systray will probably be different from the icons that others have on their computers. Perhaps you will not need to know all of them, but if you are a bit curious like me, it could be fun to find out. Just “hover” your mouse on whatever it is and a small label should appear with a short name or description. Then use Google to satisfy your itchy curiosity! *

Text Messaging or “Texting” - Have you tried it yet?

Phil Sorrentino, Member, Sarasota PCUG, FL, July 2012 issue, PC Monitor, www.spcug.org,
pcugedit@verizon.net

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.

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/acronyms.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-PSleepy, 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. 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. 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 *



Presented at the Southwest Technology & Computer Conference, San Diego, by Dodi Glenn, VIPRE Product Manager, GFI Software (with Kathy Wattman, Product Marketing Manager), By Susan Kennedy, Member, TUGNET, California, www.tugnet.org, newsletter@tugnet.org

What, you ask, is VIPRE? The name is an acronym for Virus Intrusion Protection and Remediation Engine. More simply, VIPRE by GFI Software Inc. (formerly Sunbelt Software) is a product line that includes both a stand-alone antivirus program and a more comprehensive internet security suite.

Dodi Glenn, Product Manager for GFI, started by asking us “What is malware? What dangers are out there?” Malware includes adware, bots, dialer programs, keyloggers, rogue anti-virus programs, rootkits, and spyware along with the usual viruses, worms and Trojans. He described malware as having “gone wild” with a huge increase in recent years. The purpose is no longer to damage people’s computers; the motive today is almost 100% financial. Cyber criminals want access to your computer, your passwords and account information, and thus to your money! Besides stealing from your accounts directly, crooks make fortunes in selling credit card information. Much of this criminal activity originates in Russia and China.

Top threats include various forms of Java script. Some of the threats he named are the System Restore Rogue and S.M.A.R.T. Repair that may harm your hard disk drive.

A few threats created by governments have escaped into the world at large. We probably all know of the Stuxnet virus, believed to have been created to wreak havoc with Iran’s nuclear program, but coming along today is Duqu, first spotted in September 2011. Another is Flame, a program developed by the CIA, NSA and Israeli military, to attack nukes in the Middle East. For those of you who are fluent in high-level “geek-speak,” GFI produced a video (33 minutes) on their analysis of Flame at <http://vimeo.com/44382073>; it’s pretty heavy on the technical stuff.

Another type of threat involves social engineering, and many of these come out of India. One example spoofs Microsoft’s tech support center, where a person calls on the telephone to tell you of a problem with your computer that he can fix if you just allow him remote access. The Better Business Bureau published an article you can read at <http://tinyurl.com/7noulky>. You can also see videos on this threat on YouTube by searching for Microsoft Service Support Center.

Where does this malware come from? Today it’s mostly social networking (e.g., Facebook), online games, and email or through “portals” you access either for games or chatting in forums. Malware (including spam) gets into your email through hacked web sites you visit, instant messages (such as posting on Facebook), and what are known as “exploits” in valid programs such as PDF, Java script, and Flash Player.

One threat few recognize is the “lost” flash drive. If you find a flash drive dropped in a parking lot or lying on a library table, for example, the natural instinct is to plug it in to a) see if the owner’s name is available or b) just to see what might be on it. Don’t do it! That drive may have been left intentionally because it was deliberately infected with malware (such as a keylogger or remote dialer) that will infect your computer when you try to access the info.

Dodi then described the steps one should take if your computer becomes infected or you suspect it may be.

- Be sure you have a good up-to-date antivirus program on all machines before you access the internet.
- Scan all your machines if you are on a network.
- If you discover a worm or virus on one machine, unplug it from your network.
- Get VIPRE Rescue from <http://live.sunbeltsoftware.com> or <http://live.vipreantivirus.com>; then restart your machine in Safe Mode and run the Rescue program. When the report displays, any entries in red are serious threats that must be removed.

Some other good anti-malware programs that Dodi recommends (many free) are

- Malware Bytes (www.malwarebytes.org)
- Super Anti-Spyware (www.superantispyware.com)
- TDSS Killer (www.super.kaspersky.com/)
- ComboFix (www.bleepingcomputer.com/download/anti-virus/combofix) and
- HijackThis (from any of several sites such as www.majorgeeks.com or www.filehippo.com.)

How can you prevent these threats from getting to your computer?

- Keep Adobe Flash Player and Java updated.
- Disable Java scripts from running in Adobe.
- Disable the function that lets your browser open PDF files automatically.
- Keep your operating system patched and updated.
- Use a reliable anti-virus program or internet security suite.

Vipre cont. from page 10

Some other tips Dodi offered include:

- Don't click links that you find in emails or on web sites; or at least do so with great caution.
- Be very wary of attachments to emails, even from people you know. The bad guys may have "spoofed" your friend's email address and sent you malware.
- Use a "site advisor" such as Web of Trust or McAfee's Site Advisor. These program add-ons check web sites to see if they are safe and secure for you to visit. Web of Trust (WOT) (www.mywot.com) is one that works in all browsers. It is community driven; that is, it is run by its users. When you are checking a web site, a red circle means the web site is infected.

- Watch your mobile devices (tablets, smart phones, ebook readers) as carefully as your main computer. "Lookout" and VIPRE Mobile for Android are free programs for this. VIPRE Android also backs up your contacts and has a locator should you misplace your phone. (Kindle readers run on Android, but VIPRE Mobile is currently restricted by Amazon.)

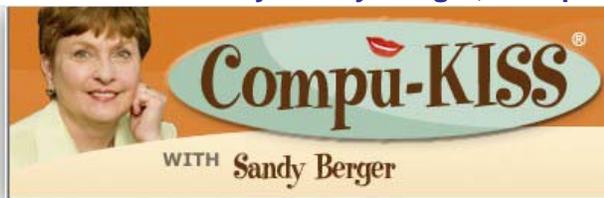
A new threat is those ubiquitous QR codes that are popping up everywhere. The Norton security program warns of bad QR codes.

Following these tips will not protect you 100%—nothing can, but they will go a long way to keep your internet experience safe. *



Apple, Google, & Microsoft Create Technology Ecosystems

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS, www.compukiss.com, sandy@compukiss.com



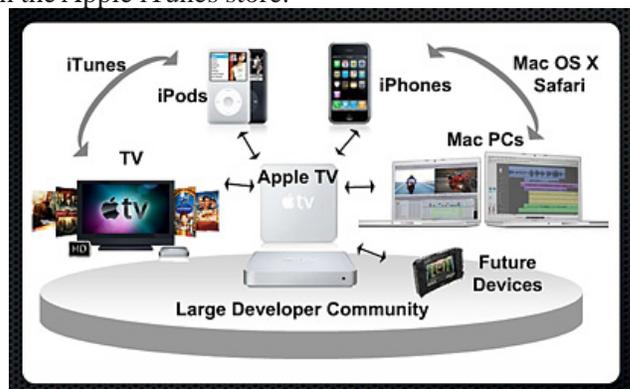
Today's technology is being separated into ecosystems. Will you buy into Apple's ecosystem? Google's Ecosystem? Amazon's? or Microsoft's? Or perhaps you have already bought into one or the other without even knowing it? This is a must read for anyone making purchasing a piece of digital equipment or software.

Not only has technology changed over the last few years, but the way we use technology has also changed. There used to be two main camps when it came to technology: PC and Mac. These were built around the two competing computers systems, Microsoft's Windows PC operating system and Apple's Mac operating system. Software was written specifically for each of these systems, so you couldn't use PC software on a Mac or Mac software on a PC. When you bought a computer, you pretty much bought into one of these two types of computers. The PCs and Apple battled it out for years with PC garnering more than 90% of the market and Apple never getting out of single digits.

Now, however, things have completely changed. With the introduction of the iPhone and the iPad, Apple has soared in popularity. Other large companies have become technology powerhouses. Google with their Android operating system and Amazon have both entered the fray, while Microsoft is struggling to keep up.

Previously we were only talking about computers, but now we are talking about smartphones, tablets, and cloud computing. We are talking about entire ecosystems. The choices are mind-boggling. Each of the above mentioned companies is trying to get you to buy into their ecosystem. Each is pretty much proprietary. That means that for the most part, they are incompatible.

Right now, Apple has the largest ecosystem (I call it an ecosystem because it is an entire network or environment where one thing is dependent on another.) Apple's iPhone and iPads run on the iOS operating system. These devices run apps, which are like mini software programs that are purchased from the iTunes App store. There are currently more than 500,000 in Apple's App store. Some are free, but many are sold for a fee. These can only be used on Apple devices. If you switch to a Google Android phone or tablet, you cannot use the Apple products that you may have already purchased. You have to repurchase them from the Android Marketplace that has apps similar to those found in the Apple iTunes store.



This ecosystem also extends to storage and services in the cloud (think Internet). Apple has announced a cloud service, called iCloud that lets you store information on Apple's servers and access it from any Internet-connected device. Amazon, Microsoft, and Google also have cloud storage systems available. Since many of Microsoft's followers use Microsoft Office, Google has also developed a set of programs that are the equivalent of Microsoft Office programs, but that can be stored in the cloud and used from any Internet-connected device.



These companies make money from their hardware and their App sales. They give you a basic amount of cloud storage for free, but if you need more storage, there is a charge. You can see why so many companies are battling for supremacy of their ecosystem. It is very profitable.

Each of the current ecosystems is expanding. Apple not only has the software in its App store, but they also have the hardware in their iPhone, iPad devices and Mac computers. Apple recently announced their new cloud storage system and an App store for their Mac computers. Their new Lion operating system which is used for their Mac computers is so similar to the iOS operating system that you have to wonder just how soon the Mac computer and the Apple iPhone and iPads will share an operating system. When that happens, they will have added another component to their ecosystem.

Microsoft is a slightly different story. They don't manufacture smartphones or tablets, but they have a new mobile operating system called Windows Phone 7, which runs on hardware from other manufacturers. Microsoft has an App Marketplace like Apple and Google. They also have cloud storage. The phones that run the Microsoft operating system shine at running Microsoft office programs like Word and Excel. This is a part of their ecosystem. I expect that when Microsoft comes out with Windows 8, it will also be able to run on tablets, so we will soon see tablets running Microsoft software and apps.



Amazon has developed their own app store filled with Android apps. They also have a cloud storage system called Amazon Cloud Drive. They are already into the hardware business with their Kindle e-reader, and I expect that they will soon release a tablet to compete with the Apple iPad.

Blackberry and HP have both entered this competition with operating systems, hardware, and app stores of their own.

It's not that you cannot mix products. For instance, my husband has an Android phone, while we also own an iPad. He obviously can use both, but to do so, he had to learn two different operating systems. On top of that, if he wants to have a certain app on both his phone and our tablet, we may have to purchase it twice, buying a copy for his phone from the Android Marketplace and buying a copy for our tablet from the iTunes store. So not only is it easier to stay within one ecosystem, it is also more economical.

Knowing about these ecosystems may make purchasing a tablet or a new smartphone a little more complicated, because besides assessing the qualities of the hardware, you also have to stop and think about the ecosystem you are buying into. Yet, the number of large companies involved in this rivalry and the constant changes, additions, and improvements they make to their line-ups makes this a very exciting time in the history of technology. *

Tables In Word

Tools such as Microsoft Word 2003 offer a variety of standard formats that can be applied to tables. Just click anywhere in your table and then click Table and TableAutoFormat. A formatting dialog box will appear, so you can select from a variety of established format styles. Examples are shown for each format, so you can experiment with different looks until you find the one that suits the situation best. When you decide on a format, click Apply to reformat your table. If you make a mistake or change your mind, click Undo and repeat this process to apply another table format.

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The Tip Corner – July 2012

Bill Sheff, Novice SIG Coordinator, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA, July 2012 issue, The LVCG Journal, www.lvcg.org, nsheff@aol.com

Shift+Space Web 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.

What Is Pinning and how do I do It?

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 or programs that are used on a regular basis. 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.

Should I use Sleep, Hibernate or Shut it down?

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 shut-down 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 components 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.

Windows 7 Autoplay Settings

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 it's inserted into your computer. When you are done, press Save. That's 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. *

Webpage Font Size too small? -

Think about Screen Resolution

Phil Sorrentino, Member, Sarasota PCUG, FL, August 2012 issue, PC Monitor,
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Anyone who has taken our basic computer classes knows that the font size can be changed just by selecting the appropriate text and then selecting the desired text size, usually from about 8 points to 72 points. And if you were in one of my classes you know that a point is 1/72nd of an inch. That's right; a 72 point selection will print text, on a printer, one inch high.

But everything you see on the screen is not as easy to control as the font of the text of a word processing document. There are, typically, no font size selections on a webpage when you're surfing the web; although you can make some font selections if you are using Internet Explorer. This selection is made by double clicking Tools, then selecting Internet Options. The "fonts" selection is toward the bottom of the window. Here you can select "default" fonts to be used if the webpage does not determine a font. But, practically speaking, you probably will never use these fonts, so don't rush to change these selections. (Other browsers probably have similar selections.) The size of the font that you see on your monitor is determined by settings that are determined by the webpage, and settings on your display graphics adapter. The webpage settings are determined by the webpage designer; the browser just follows the webpage's direction. The display graphics adapter settings are adjustable and are located in the "Display" Control Panel.

In Windows 7, a quick way to get to the Display control panel is to right-click on any empty space on the desktop, select "Personalize", and finally select "Display" (lower left). At this point you can select "Smaller" (the default type size), "Medium", or "Larger". Because these settings depend on the Screen Resolution that is set, if you choose Medium or Larger you may be alerted that "*Some items may not fit on your screen if you choose this setting while your display is set to this resolution.*" So screen resolution is involved in determining the font size and is an important parameter to understand, so that you can make the best choice.

Screen Resolution is generally defined in terms of pixels. A pixel is a picture element. (There is a technical difference between pixels and dots depending on different displays, but for simplicity, for this discussion I am going to use the term dot in the place of pixel.) So Screen Resolution, then, is the number of dots that can be displayed on the screen. It is usually indicated by two numbers, first the horizontal number of dots, followed by the vertical number of dots, for example, 640x480, 800x600, 1024x768, or 1920x1080. (Yes, if you multiply the horizontal and vertical numbers, you get the total number of dots displayed on the screen.) These four resolution settings are also called VGA, SVGA, XGA, and HD-1080. (There are a whole host of screen resolutions that can potentially be used, and are summarized at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Display_resolution. The chart shows the most common display screen resolutions.) The HD-1080 resolution is also the standard used in High Definition Televisions, which is typically referred to as 1080p. So, if you are looking for a display that will show High Definition movies the way they were intended to be shown, make sure your Display Adapter is capable of showing at least 1920x1080.

The Screen Resolution control can be reached easily by right-clicking in any empty space on the desktop, and then selecting "Screen Resolution". (Or by clicking the start button, followed by selecting "Control Panel", followed by selecting "Display", followed by selecting "Adjust resolution" {upper left}.) The current screen resolution is shown as "Screen Resolution:", in the middle of the Screen Resolution window. The Screen Resolution slider control can be accessed by clicking the downward facing triangle next to the resolution that is currently selected. The Screen Resolution slider controls the resolution of the display and hence the size of text on the screen. The number of selections on this control is determined by your display adapter and your particular monitor. You may have from 2 to many selections. The selections on the slider range from

[Webpage Font Size cont. on page 14](#)

“Low” to “High”. (Click on a different resolution on the bar to see a preview of the changed setting in the “Change the appearance of the display” box, (notice how the box representing the screen changes size and shape), then if you like it, click “Apply”, if you don’t like it try another, or click “Cancel”.) Moving towards “High” puts more “dots” on the screen; however, this typically makes the size of objects smaller. Decreasing this setting (moving towards Low) usually makes things larger, but you might start to lose the right side of some web pages. (If you can’t easily read the right side of a webpage, you might increase this setting, but things will probably get a little smaller. Try a setting with a few of your favorite web pages and see what setting is the best compromise.)

If you are still wondering what setting to use, click on “What display setting shall I choose?” and you will be treated to a help screen that further discusses screen size and screen resolution with some recommendations for appropriate settings for different display sizes. Note also, that you can easily get to the “Display Font Size” screen (discussed above) by clicking on “Make text and other items smaller or larger”.

If you were wondering why the shape of the screen changes with resolution, it is because the resolutions that are supported by the display adapter cover the older 4x3 aspect ratio and the more current 16x9 (wide angle) aspect ratio. The 4x3 aspect ratio is what we inherited from seventy years of analog TV screens. All TV screens, before HD, were built with this aspect ratio. Aspect ratio is typically described by horizontal x vertical. So a 4x3 TV screen has 3 vertical increments for every 4 horizontal increments. (Academic observation for math majors: this always formed a 3x4x5 triangle. A 25 inch TV had a 25 inch diagonal with a 20 inch horizontal and a 15 inch vertical.) The more current 16x9 wide angle aspect ratio screens provide more viewing in the horizontal. For every 3 vertical increments there are 16/3 or 5 1/3 horizontal increments showing a wider angle view.

Screen Resolution is the key to getting a comfortable view of your favorite web pages. If you need to, try some different settings. If you still aren’t happy, maybe try another Graphics Adapter, if we’re talking about a desktop. If we’re talking about a laptop, you’re probably going to live with those currently provided. It is just about impossible to change the graphics adapter on a laptop. *

Making Your Computer Easier to Use

Nancy DeMarte, Regular Columnist (Office Talk), Sarasota PCUG, Florida, May 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor, www.spcug.org, ndemarte@Verizon.net

In these days when almost everyone is using a computer, there are many features of operating systems and software that can help users with physical limitations. Microsoft has enhanced its features in this area, both in Windows 7 and recent versions of Microsoft Office. This article gives an overview of these features and links to some helpful sites for people interested in making the tools work for them. In Windows 7, the accessibility tools are found in the Ease of Access Center (Start – Control Panel – Ease of Access Center). These tools are designed to help people who have problems with vision, hearing, and dexterity.

Low Vision and Blindness

For the person who finds the computer display hard to read, changing a few settings in the Ease of Access Center can make life easier. You can select a High Contrast theme which shows either white text on a black background or all bold black text on a white background for all text, including toolbars and ribbons. This feature is especially useful for users with conditions like macular degeneration. The Magnifier tool enlarges the portion of the screen where the mouse pointer is located, a lifesaver when trying to read small text in a document or on a webpage. Like other tools, it can be pinned to the taskbar for easy access. Other settings let you remove unnecessary background images or animations, make the flashing cursor thicker and more visible when typing, and sharpen the appearance of

window borders to make them easier to see.

A person who is blind can work with a Windows computer through a combination of the Narrator and Voice Recognition tools using speakers and a microphone. Narrator reads text aloud as it appears on the screen and describes things like error messages. The Voice Recognition tool, introduced in Word 2010, translates the user’s speech into text on the screen. It does need initial setup, involving training the tool to understand the user’s vocal patterns. Another tool, Audio Description, gives oral narration of the action in videos.

Limited Dexterity

A number of tools are designed to assist the person with limited finger dexterity. Turning on the Mouse Keys lets you move the pointer on the screen using the arrow keys instead of the mouse. Sticky Keys let you press keystroke combinations, such as Ctrl+Alt+Del, one key at a time. Toggle Keys play an alert sound when you press the Caps Lock, Num Lock or Scroll Lock keys, saving you from unanticipated results like a sentence in all caps. Filter Keys can be set to ignore unintentional keystrokes, such as several in rapid succession or holding down a key for an unusually long time.

The Voice Recognition tool, besides assisting blind users, is also useful either for those with limited dexterity or

inadequate typing skills. The on-screen keyboard lets the hunt-and-peck typist click letters on a keyboard displayed on the screen. For those who have trouble maneuvering a mouse, one solution is to develop the habit of using keyboard shortcuts in place of mouse clicks. Searching the Internet will provide lists of standard keystroke shortcuts; you can also create your own. Windows' Ease of Access Center also has features that can help. One option lets you hover the mouse pointer over a window to open it, rather than clicking. Other settings for the mouse use can be found in the Control Panel - Mouse. Here you can change the speed of the mouse click and create a trail of pointer images behind the moving pointer to keep it in view. You can also change the shape and size of pointer icons.

I'm pleased to announce the following advisor assignments. Information will be sent to the regions with the next NOOZ; to be sent after the 2012 Summer Virtual Conference (August 4) e-mail.

Region 1 - Sam Wexler

Region 2 - Gabe Goldberg

Region 3 - Bob Vance

Region 4 - Charlotte Semple (back from a hiatus from APCUG)

Region 5 - Judy T aylour

Region 6 - Greg West

Region 7 - Roger Tesch

Region 8 - Bill James

Region 9 - Melvin Weekley (back from a hiatus from APCUG)

Region 10 - Cheryl Wester

Region 11 - Roger Tesch

International - Greg West

Hearing Loss

Although computers are more visual than auditory, users with hearing loss need a few tools to assist them. In the Ease of Access Center, you can change alerts in many programs from sound to a text alert or a flash on the screen. Another setting displays text captions for spoken dialogue in multi media programs.

Accessibility Features in MS Office 2010

Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint 2010 have new features to help make documents, spreadsheets, and presentations more accessible to those with limitations. One is the Accessibility Checker. This tool diagnoses a file for any areas that might make it difficult to view or use. The author of the file can review the list and make any changes he feels are needed. Another new tool is Mini Translator, which translates a word or phrase from another language into English when the mouse points to it. Clicking the Play button lets you hear the word or phrase pronounced. Another feature new to Office 2010 is the ability to add

text descriptions to shapes and images for those who can't view them. Enlarging text in Word 2010 is easy with the zoom slider in the right bottom corner and a new full screen Reading View option which enlarges and sharpens document text. PowerPoint 2010 has added the capability to add closed captions to audio and video and embed them in a slide presentation.

Windows is compatible with many third party assistive software programs and devices. MS Office 2003 -2010 users can turn documents into Talking Books by downloading the "Save As Daisy" add-in. Go to <http://sourceforge.net> and search for and download/install "Save As DAISY for Office (your version)." Then install a DAISY-compatible digital talking book reader, such as the free AMIS reader. www.DAISY.org/amis/download. Versions are available for Office 2007/2010 and for Office 2003 with the Office 2007 compatibility pack installed. Other requirements are listed at the sourceforge.net website.

The number of options to increase accessibility to a computer can be overwhelming. This overview will make you aware of some of them, but only you can decide which ones you want to try. You can complete a short questionnaire in the Ease of Access Center to help with your decision. A few of these tools have a learning curve that can be greatly reduced by watching the video tutorials (some close-captioned) and reading support documents located at www.microsoft.com/enable/products/office. Most can also be accessed directly from links in the Ease of Access Center. Fortunately, the support and setup tutorials for most of these tools are numerous and well done. More information can be found by searching www.microsoft.com/accessibility. *

Fun Site: Glamour Dog



Think you have a lot of clothes in your wardrobe and not enough for man's best friend? No worries, now you can dress up your little pooch for a brisk walk outside or to the nines for a social gathering. Complete with designer dog clothes, dog carriers, dog beds, collars & leashes, you can fulfill your furry friends biscuit dreams with all the fine clothes and accessories. If spending money on clothes for your pooch doesn't sound all that enticing, just take a look at the site and you'll be sure to bark...ahem, chuckle, when you see all the adorable little outfits.

Glamour Dog can be found at: <http://www.glamourdog.com/index.html>

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Where's the Technology?

Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA, July 2012 issue, Drive Light, www.uchug.org, president@uchug.org

With all the political posturing going on in this election year, we should be used to promises that go unfulfilled. In the technical arena, we hear a lot about potential new advances; though often wait a long time to see the benefits ourselves. Sometimes the prognosticators are wildly optimistic or the development proves too difficult, and we never see (or at least haven't seen up to this point) the mass application of a great new product or technology (an example is the Segway personal transporter). I've bought a number of new computers recently, and have been a little surprised about some of the features currently available. There are a few features that I've some of the features currently available. There are a few features that I've been hearing about for a few years that still are not available on most new PCs. There are also features that I've never heard of that now appear to be standard. All in all, just like the 1980's Wendy's commercials that asked "Where's the beef?" I'm left asking "Where's the technology?"

The entertainment industry has also made its contributions to our unmet expectations for technology over the years. Remember the late 1960's television series "Lost in Space"? It was scripted to occur in 1997, yet we are still waiting for interplanetary space travel, talking autonomous robots and other innovations portrayed as commonplace. The movies "2001: A Space Odyssey" and "2010" portrayed many similar technological advances for times we have now passed. We do have the International Space Station, but it is not in the same league as the one in "2001". We never got the public videophone capability Dr. Heywood Floyd used to call back to Earth from the station in the film, though I guess it was really not much better than what we can do with Skype today. Some might argue it is just as well we don't yet have computers as sophisticated (especially in interaction with humans) as HAL 9000, though maybe IBM's Watson is getting close.

The reality of technological advancement in personal computers is that, though computers are not yet as sophisticated as HAL or Watson, they are pervasive. Only cell phones are more common now as tech tools in our society, and with smart phones the lines between phones and computers are blurring. There are often examples of advanced technology available to a few at great price, such as Watson in computing or the few wealthy individuals that have bought their way into space on a Russian rocket. These don't really portray the true advancement in technology available to the general public, so I've looked to the computers I've bought recently as a better representation of technology promised and fulfilled.

In the last two years, I've bought two new laptops and two new desktop computers for my wife and myself.

These replace XP computers that were up to seven years old, and so represent a big step up in computer technology. The first replacement, and first Windows 7 machine in my house was an Acer Aspire X3950 mini desktop for my wife. Last year I bought myself a Lenovo IdeaCentre K330B desktop, and I bought a 15.6" Fujitsu Lifebook AH531 notebook for my wife. I liked the laptop so much I got a 14" Fujitsu Lifebook LH531 laptop for myself this year. All had Windows 7 and Intel i3 or i5 processors. These were not the fanciest nor the cheapest computers, but are ones I thought represented the best in value in the \$400 to \$600 price range. It is interesting to review the features available in these "typical" computers as compared to the latest technology has to offer.

In networking, we have come a long way. Once, everyone connected to the Internet through a phone modem. Now modems are absent from new computers, having been removed years ago. Wired Ethernet capability became the replacement, proceeding quickly from 10/100BASE-TX to Gigabit Ethernet, which is now the standard on all new computers. All four of my new computers include 10/100/1000 wired Ethernet capability, though I don't take advantage of the increased Gigabit speed, as my router and switches are all still only 10/100 capable. A survey of Fry's items online showed that for new networking gear, Gigabit has not become the standard that it has for computers and laptops. Most new switches available are 10/100/1000, but only about half the routers are.

The big push in networking improvement is now in wireless networking. Wireless computer users started out in 1999 with 11 Mbit/s 802.11b, and have proceeded up the alphabet with 802.11g (54 Mbit/s), n (up to 150 Mbit/s) and finally ac (up to 866 Mbit/s). My two new laptops both are b/g/n capable, though once again my present router is limited to 802.11g. Here my home network is again behind the times, as most new routers only go up to n capability. Though Fry's does sell an 802.11ac router, I was not able to find any of their laptops with that capability. Even the thin Ultrabook laptops, which don't have a wired Ethernet RJ-45 connector, have yet to add 802.11ac to their features.

It is somewhat surprising to me that there has been such an emphasis on networking speed improvement recently, when for most people the benefits above 10/100 wired and 802.11g wireless are lost. Since few people have network hard drives, their network traffic consists exclusively of an Internet connection, which is often 10 Mbps or less. My Time Warner Cable plan presently gives me a measured 16 Mbps, but even if I bought the 50 Mbps "Ultimate" plan, my present network would not be a limiting factor.

The other typical computer interface is for peripheral devices. This used to consist of a serial port DB-9 connector, but computers lost those years ago. USB2 (Universal Serial Bus, version 2.0, 480 Mbps) became and still is the replacement peripheral interface standard, though now USB3 (5 Gbps) is finally appearing on some accessory devices and computers. USB3 adoption on computers presently appears to be related to price, with USB3 more likely on higher-end computers and laptops. None of my four new computers have USB3 capability, though Fry's showed it was available (often one port only, along with a couple USB2 ports) on some computers in the \$500 to \$1000 price range, and appeared to be on most all computers above \$1000. It surprised me to learn that of the two versions of Microsoft Surface tablet computer announced, the one based on the ARM processor had a USB2 port, with USB3 only available on the Windows 8, Intel processor version. For some reason (perhaps cost), the adoption of USB3 has not gone as fast as I would have thought.

Another interface I'd thought would become more popular and prevalent is eSATA, but for some reason it has not. It provides an external interface for the 3 or 6 Gbps SATA interface commonly used on hard drives. Though eSATA interface cards are available to add to computers, I've not seen any new machines come with this interface built in. Another very new high-speed serial interface that appears for now to be only available in iMacs is Intel's Thunderbolt; it promises 20 Gbps.

A surprise in the other direction is the addition of an HDMI (High-Definition Multimedia Interface) video output to almost every new computer. It is present on all of my new laptops and desktops. Since HDMI is available on all new HDTVs as an input, it has become for me the default way to hook up a laptop to my TV. When I want to show new photos to my family, the best way is to display them on our HDTV, using an HDMI connected laptop as the source. Since there are more and more devices (like set top boxes, DVD/Blu-ray disc players and HD video camcorders) already competing for the few TV HDMI inputs, I think HDMI switches, which allow multiple devices to use the TV ports, will become popular.

Another new video interface, one I'd never seen before I bought my laptops, is Intel wireless Display, or WiDi. Though both my new laptops have it, I've yet to try it, as it requires a compatible TV or monitor, or an adapter. While the concept sounds good, I was not able to locate many adapters, and the one I did find on Fry's site was around \$100. While it looks like Intel has pushed adoption of this interface on the laptops using their processors, having a TV to wirelessly broadcast video to will be the problem for now.

Another wireless interface that now appears to be implemented on almost all new laptops is Bluetooth. Typical uses include interface with Bluetooth mice and keyboards. While Bluetooth is available on both of my new

laptops, I so far have no peripheral devices to use with it.

Blu-ray optical drive technology has been available for over five years, but it has not displaced the standard DVD as the most popular optical disc format. I think cost is again the limiting factor in its acceptance, as Blu-ray capability appears more often in higher-cost computers. At the lower end of the capability spectrum are Blu-ray read-capable drives, which start to become available in mid to high-cost computers. Blu-ray writer drives are presently available only in the upper price tier of computers. None of my new computers came with any Blu-ray compatibility.

As time goes on, I'd expect costs to come down and allow greater adoption of some of the new features that appear limited to high-end computers, such as USB3 and Blu-ray. Until then, all I can do is pay more, or ask "Where's the technology?" *

Term From Smart Computing: amateur packet radio

Packet radio technology, which is used to send Internet data via radio waves, has been standardized since the 1960s and was used to create one of the first wireless networks in Hawaii (known as Alohanet), but it was not authorized for use by amateur radio operators in the United States until 1980. Since that time, many hobbyists have embraced the technology, using it to transmit e-mail, documents, and other files wirelessly through their radio sets.

To connect to a packet radio network, amateur radio operators must hook a computer and a special packet radio modem to their radio rig. For years these modems were limited to speeds between 1200 baud and 9600 baud, but amateur packet radio systems exist today that can reliably send and receive data at 56Kbps (kilobits per second).

The system works something like CB radio, as only one person on a channel can transmit at one time. If anyone else tuned to that channel tries to transmit at that same time, the packets collide and both transmissions are lost. This is called a half-duplex system, as opposed to a full-duplex system used by modern dial-up modems and telephones, in which the parties at both ends can transmit and receive simultaneously. To compensate for this limitation, packet radios use a protocol called AX.25 (Amateur X.25), which monitors a channel and only lets the radio send packets when no other computers are transmitting. This cuts down on the overall speed of a packet radio network, but virtually eliminates packet collisions, meaning fewer packets must be resent to their destinations, thereby making the network more efficient.

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