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Merger Status Report

Paul Howard, Treasurer

On May 2nd, changes to NCTCUG’s governing documents, consolidating Constitution and Bylaws into a single Bylaws document was approved by a favorable vote of 33 to 1 opposed. Merger activities continue with board meetings, as we change NCTCUG’s name to the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society, and merge our partner organization, the Washington Area Computer User group, into PATACS. We will have between 100 and 110 members in the merged organization – we’ve seen an uptick in membership in the predecessor groups over the past few months.

Our newsletter will be published 12 times per year, expanding from its current 8 issue schedule, and continuing as a 16 page magazine. The newsletter will be available as both a print and electronic (PDF file) publication. All members will receive a one month bonus membership extension, with those belonging to both WACUG and NCTCUG receiving two month extensions, as well as having their remaining membership months in each group added together to arrive at a new expiration date. An additional membership adjustment will apply to WACUG members who had paid a newsletter print premium fee.



Our meeting schedules will continue as today with 1st and 4th Wednesday evening meetings in Arlington (subject to Carlin Hall availability) and 3rd Saturday afternoon meetings in Fairfax. A new website, PATACS.ORG is under construction, and will be introduced soon. We have filings to make with the Virginia State Corporation Commission, and US Internal Revenue Service. Insurance coverage will need to be revised. PATACS will adopt a standard set of policies and practices for handling membership issues and our financial operations.

Officers of PATACS will be: Jim Rhodes, President; Ron Schmidt, 1st VP; Mel Mikosinski, 2nd VP; Bill Walsh, Secretary; Paul Howard, Treasurer. Directors: Jorn Dakin, Sy Fishbein, Walter Fraser, Roger Fujii, Gabe Goldberg, Mel Goldfarb, Geof Goodrum, Neal Grotenstein, Bob Rott, Nick Wenri.

editions



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Discovering Windows 7 – Part 22

By Neil Stahfest, Vice President, Tacoma Area PC User Group, Washington
December 2011 issue, the Data Line NCStahfest (at) msn.com www.tapcug.org

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The Windows operating system contains a number of built-in functions to display files, change display settings, change mouse settings, etc. Most of these functions can be accessed in more than one way. By pressing the Windows logo key (the key with the waving Windows flag – usually to the left of the space bar) either alone or in combination with another key enables you to work with Windows without using a mouse or other pointer device. For example, instead of clicking on the Windows Start Button to open the Start Menu, just press the Windows logo key. More examples follow:

File search - If you want to find a file you could click on the Windows Start button and then type the name of the file in the search box that appears above the Start button. This requires that you take one hand off the keyboard, grab the mouse, point at the button, left click and then take your hand off the mouse to enter the file name.

Using the Windows logo key, you can search without removing your fingers from the keyboard. All you have to do is simultaneously press the Windows logo key and the F key. When the search box appears, just enter the file name you are looking for.

Copying between folders - Do you ever need to move files from one folder to another? I frequently copy or move files to a flash drive. I also move pictures from my digital camera to my computer.

The usual way to copy or move files is to both folders at the same time so you can see the contents. To do this you is to open one folder, click to reduce the size of the folder to less than full screen, then move your mouse pointer to the top of the windows and click and drag the folder to the side until it “snaps” to file one side of the screen. Then you open the second folder, reduce the size, click and drag it to the other side of the screen. Then you click and drag to copy or move file from one folder to the other.

Using the Windows logo key method, you open one folder, hold down the Windows logo key and press the right arrow key to move it to one side of the screen. Next you open the second folder, hold down the Windows logo key and press the left arrow key to move it to the left side of the screen. Then you copy or move files from one folder to another in the usual manner.

Windows mobility center — Do you have a portable computer? Try pressing the Windows logo key and the X key. This opens the Windows Mobility Center. From this menu you can adjust screen brightness, check battery power and turn on or off your wireless network connection.

Connecting to multiple displays - Do you ever connect your computer to more than one display or a projector? Try pressing the Windows logo key and the P key. This brings up Windows projection controls. Use the arrow keys to switch between the choices available.

Windows properties - Do you know what your computer's system properties are? What version of Windows are you using? Is it 32-bit or 64-bit operating system? How much RAM (memory) is installed? What processor is installed in your computer? These are questions I frequently ask when I'm looking at someone else's computer. There are several ways to find this information but the easiest way is to simultaneously pressing the Windows logo key and the Pause key (you may have to scroll to see all the contents of this Window).

As you can see the Windows logo key can be pretty useful. It lets you directly access many Windows functions without going through the Windows Control Panel or using your mouse and provides a faster way to control Windows. To learn more, click on the Start button, select “Help and Support” and type “shortcut keys” in the search box.

Streaming Video Presentation by Mike Kaltschnee

Meeting review by Richard Corzo, President, Danbury Computer Society, CT

November 2011 issue, DACS.org www.dacs.org [dacsprez \(at\) dacs.org](mailto:dacsprez@www.dacs.org)

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Perhaps you've heard of people "cutting the cord," getting rid of their cable or satellite TV subscription, and relying on the Internet to watch television programming. Maybe You just want to catch up on episodes that you may have missed, or be able to watch Movies that aren't available from your cable or satellite provider.

Mike Kaltschnee explained the options, both services and devices you can hook up to your TV. He is well known for his web site www.HackingNetflix.co. So of course he mentioned Netflix, which has both a video streaming service and DVD rental by-mail service. The streaming service seems to be available on every TV, Blu-ray player, and game console; along with all the streaming devices he showed us, and a Windows PC or Mac.

Hulu and Hulu Plus is another service featuring mostly TV programs, and come in both free and paid versions. Amazon offers streaming through its Amazon Prime offering, as well as a huge selection of video on demand titles. HBO Go is available only to HBO cable subscribers, but lets you watch shows on portable devices and selected set-top boxes.

Blockbuster is similar to Netflix in offering both streaming and DVDs by mail. However, the streaming option for now requires a Dish satellite subscription.

You can select from the various options based on the service's selection of titles, price, how often you watch, and what devices they support.

To find where particular titles may be offered, Mike mentioned TV Guide (<http://www.tvguide.com>), Fanhattan (<http://www.fanhattan.com>) which has an iPad application and will soon offer a website guide, and clicker (<http://www.clicker.co>), the "Internet Television Guide."

To watch Internet TV on your television, you could hook up your Windows PC or Mac with an HDMI or VGA cable, or use your game console. Your TV itself or Blu-ray player may offer some of these services. You might also want to watch TV on your portable devices, phone, iPad, etc.

Finally, there are dedicated streaming boxes such as the Roku, Boxee, Apple TV and Google TV. A TiVo combines a DVR with an offering of Netflix, Hulu Plus, Amazon Video on Demand, and Blockbuster.

The Sony Dash was an interesting device I wasn't familiar with, and has a built-in screen. So there are a lot of options, and we're no longer limited to cable or satellite TV.



"Word has it that all the humans moved to Cyberspace."

Streaming Media

By John Somers, Member, ICON Users Group, MO

March 2012 issue, The ICON – Newsletter of the Interactive Computer Owners Network
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“Streaming” is listening to music, watching a TV program or movie as it is being delivered to you over the internet. The technology is very difficult (say geek intensive) but it works and well for many of us and is an alternative to cable or satellite delivery of the signals. Several years ago Bill Gates said famously or infamously, “The internet, who needs it!” And this year Steve Jobs said, “We are in the post PC era”. More and more people use the internet and communicate over smart phones and tablets and do not use computers as we know them. Smart phones and tablets are indeed computers but without a large monitor and a keyboard.

Streaming of music began in the mid to late 90's as personal computers became more powerful and the networks connecting them became capable of supporting faster data rates. As these trends continued, it became possible to stream TV programs and eventually movies. This is different from buying or renting a TV program or movie which is downloaded to your computer for you to watch at your convenience. The driving force is us—we do not want to be tethered to the radio or TV stations schedule or have to go to a movie theatre or to a store to buy a DVD. We want to watch what we want when we want it. Time shifting has become more sophisticated compared to the days of the VHS or Beta (remember them?) Netflix recommends 5 Mb/s or more for the best audio and video experience.

First, the sources. (And I will write only about common and legal methods/sources of content, not about illegal/pirated sources of content—mostly or completely offshore now and clearly violating copyright.)

All the websites listed in this article are .com's unless another domain is listed. (Example: Pandora.com)

MUSIC: Pandora, Spotify, 8tracks, Deezer, fizey, Grooveshark, Last.fm, Mflow, MOG, Pandora, Qriocity, Rhapsody, Slacker, Thumbplay, we7, WiMP and Zune are among the streaming music sources. This list

is probably not complete as things change practically daily. Pandora and Rhapsody are among the best known. Pandora is free but you get ads. There is a paid version (\$3.50/month) without ads. You get to choose your artist or genre or composer or song and they deliver that or similar material to you. It is also available on many automobiles and on tablets and smart phones as well as computers. For details of how each of these services work and if you need to download a player, and whether they are free or pay I refer you to their websites. Which, if any, you choose, is a very personal choice: what works for you. Your computer will understand the format as all send MP3's and other common music formats. Only Microsoft uses Windows Media Audio files for music but Zune (Microsoft's service) streams in MP3, AAC, MP4, mp4, mov, and WMA formats.

TV Programs and Movies: some commercial, some not. Zune, Netflix, Atom.com, blip.tv, Break.com, Citytv.com.co, DaCast, EngageMedia, Flickr, iFilm, imeem, Metacafe, MoboVivo, Multiply, MyVideo, Openfilm, Phanfare, Qik, Revver, RuTube, ScienceStage, sevenload, showmedo, Tudou, Twango, U-verse, Veoh, Vahoo Video, Youku, and YouTube are among sources for streaming video on-line.

I want to emphasize the commercial ones with commercial TV programs and movies and those most used: Netflix, Hulu, and HuluPlus, and Amazon. You can also get TV in Win7 with Media Center set for TV. Some networks are increasingly moving you to their site for the TV programs (CBS on Hulu for example). Disney-ABC, NBC and Fox own Hulu. Netflix is an independent company which began renting DVD's by mail and more recently began streaming. You may be aware of the upset when they tried to separate the DVD service and the streaming and charge more for streaming.

Hulu free gives you the latest 5 episodes of your favorite TV programs. For \$7.99 monthly (HuluPlus)

you get the full season and sometimes more than one season. Movies are the current ones and many older ones (Some services claim 10,000.) You get to choose. It's not the manager of your local Cineplex choosing. Once released on DVD they become generally available if the service has negotiated rights to the flick or to the studio's films. There clearly is conflict between Netflix, Hulu and Amazon and other streaming services and the studios. The movie companies are terrified about what happened to the music industry and only grudgingly cooperate.

How do you get the signal from your router/wireless access point to your TV and what equipment do you need? The simplest way is by registering your device with the service using your Xbox, Playstation 3, Wii, Blu-ray DVD player, smart phone, or other internet/wireless enabled device. Yes, you can use a computer and the HDMI output on your computer to the HDMI input on your TV. You can also use an Ethernet cable network or route the signal through a power line network. If you want to see other internet material on your big screen TV (using it as a giant monitor), you need a "smart" TV. Remember the signals on the internet are different from those on your cable/satellite/ or over the air TV station, and a "brain" is needed for the conversion automatically. Some Smart TV's are wireless enabled, and Sony and Samsung make wireless adapters for their TV's. I presume other manufacturers do so also.

Amazon now has two forms of video access: Amazon Instant Videos and (Amazon) Prime Instant Video. The former provides rental or purchase of videos which may be watched by streaming or downloaded to your computer and watched later. Prime Instant Video provides unlimited streaming of thousands of movies and TV shows without commercials if you are a Prime (\$79/yr) member. Not all videos in the Amazon Instant Video store are in the Prime instant video catalog. Videos in the Prime Instant Video catalog can only be watched by streaming and are not available for downloading. There is a great deal of information on the Amazon site. Start on the upper left side of the home page where it says "Instant Video" and on the following page on the right side below "Start Your one Month Free Trial" is "Help and FAQ's." Click there and on the following page in the middle in blue is a link "Amazon Instant Video" and then on the next page in the middle is "Watching Videos" which gives several choices depending on whether you will be us-

ing a computer or an internet connected device. When you (tired yet?) go to your choice, you will get details of connection methods and possibilities.

The easiest way to connect is the HDMI cable from computer to TV and there are adapters to convert the business end of the HDMI to composite cables (3 cables, Red and white audio and yellow video) if your set requires those connectors.

Roku, a streaming device, available for about \$50 from roku.com has comprehensive connection directions. The Roku XD/S has HDMI and component output for high fidelity video on new and older televisions.

Nintendo has just announced that Hulu and HuluPlus can now be streamed on the Wii (they previously just had Netflix) but you will need to download an "app" from their website.

Redbox and Verizon have announced they will start a streaming service, no details yet.

I will mention iTunes since everyone knows them. They stream radio stations, podcasts, and iTunes University (lectures from many U's; there is a huge list on their site) but not TV programs or movies. Those are rentals. If you rent a TV program or movie from them, it is downloaded to your machine (not streamed). You have it for 30 days, but once you start watching you only have 48 hours (TV) or 24 hours (movie) to watch it. From iTunes.com, download iTunes 10.[6] for Mac/PC.

Important to remember: not all services carry all content (programs, movies), and not all devices other than computers (and Roku?) will display all content. Check their websites before plunging in. Apple TV and Google TV seem to be especially limited but other devices may be also.

The bottom line is that the power of computers, the capacity of operating systems, and the capabilities of the networks have improved to the point that streaming has become possible for almost everyone.



Using Windows Task Manager to Get Out of Potential Harmful Situations

By Terry MacLennan, Member at Large, Sauk Computer Users Group, IL

Originally published in The Computer Connection, the newsletter of the Sauk Computer Users Group
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There is an easy method of getting your computer out of two situations of potential harm. To do this, we will use the operating system's built-in program called the Task Manager.

The first situation is when you have too many programs running at one time and the computer locks up. This lockup can also be caused by a single program that for one Reason or another, fails to run properly. Reaching over and hitting the power button may seem to be your only option but there is a much better choice.

The second situation occurs when you are on a webpage and one of those realistic looking but totally phony "security alerts" pops up on your monitor screen warning you of imminent danger of viruses and other malware that "it" has detected on your computer. These scare popups trick many naive people into clicking on them only to find out that now their computer truly is infected and control has been lost. You are totally helpless when you have clicked on one of these so-called "security" scam programs.

You absolutely must not click anywhere on these popups including buttons that say something to the effect of "No Thanks," "Decline" or even "Continue Unprotected." But, instead of clicking one of those, you may decide, almost instinctively, to click the "X" in the corner of the pop-up box. Doing any of these actions is almost like turning your house alarm off, opening the door and saying "come on in" to the masked bandit standing outside. Paying the "bandits" for their "security program" which is holding your computer hostage is an extremely poor choice. Do you really want to pay the thieves with your credit card and its number?

But you are now stuck in a situation where you may try to click off the web page by clicking on its "X" in the upper right hand corner. But you soon find out that

that won't work as you first need to close the window (the pop-up in this case) that is on top.

Hard shutting down the computer by using the power button may seem to be your only option but again there is a better alternative.

Your best friend in both situations is the Task Manager. To open this built-in program, press and hold the CTRL and ALT keys with your left hand, then tap the DEL key with your right hand.

In Win XP, this will automatically open the Task Manager while with Windows 7 it will take you to a page with a list of options. Click the bottom option and it will open the Task Manager which looks nearly identical to the XP one. From here, everything is the same for both systems.

Along the top edge of the Task Manager is a row of tabs. Click the Applications tab, if it doesn't happen to automatically be on that tab. When you have opened it up, you will see a listing of all the programs and web pages that are running.

If your computer is locked up, look for any programs that are "Not responding." Click the program one time to highlight it then click on End Task at the bottom. This should close the nonresponsive program and free your computer.

If the computer remains locked up, use the same method to close all of the remaining Programs that are running then shut down as you would normally. Everything should be back to normal when you reboot the computer.

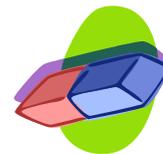
A hard shutdown with the power button is absolutely the last resort as this could potentially damage files.

East-Tec Eraser – Take Out The Garbage Permanently And Forever

Software Review by Herb Goldstein, Editor, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

January 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor www.spcug.org [pcugedit \(at\) Verizon.net](mailto:pcugedit@verizon.net)

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There's no shortage of software that will permanently erase files, but if you simply want the very best there is one that spares none of the bells and whistles, East-Tec Eraser leads the pack. It's for people that demand that their erasures, albeit a single file or an entire disk is erased in such a way as to be totally, completely, and unequivocally gone and unrecoverable by any means or entity known to man. In fact, it surpasses even top-secret military requirements.

East-Tec erasure is not only a leading permanent deleting utility, it offers an extremely useful associated bag of tricks you can employ at your choosing:

1. It will search any of your drives or partitions for remnants of previously deleted files and remove any trace.
2. It will wipe any remnants that exist in the free space of your drives and in your swap files.
3. East-Tec's Privacy Guard will wipe web pages, pictures, temp files, history, recent docs and all other tracks you usually accumulate in your Internet wanderings, newsreaders and web browser.
4. It will permanently erase the contents of your recycle bin.
5. It will permanently erase the contents of your "deleted items" folder in Outlook Express and compact the information in your other folders.
6. It will permit you to schedule regular erasure tasks of your time and choosing.
7. In Windows XP and in 32-bit versions of Windows 7, Eraser installs in your context (right-click) menu in Windows Explorer or your alternative file manager. If you right-click on any files or folders you have selected, eraser will promptly dispatch them beyond recovery. While Eraser is not available in the *context menu* of 64-bit Windows 7, it is fully functional everywhere else in Windows 7.

8. Eraser can completely wipe an entire hard drive, CD or other media, making it safe for disposal.
9. You can password protect the use of Eraser.
10. You are provided a choice among several permanent and secure erasure methods which are fully explained.
11. Eraser will conveniently destroy the accumulation of an Internet session with a single click.

The program is easy to install and use. A total novice will have no problem employing any or all of its wizard-driven features. It has received top awards in such computer publications as PC World.

East-Tec Eraser provides the most advanced, thorough and effective erasure utility of its kind, to safeguard and protect your privacy. It is well worth its cost of \$39.95. You can try it for free or purchase it at www.east-tec.com.



The Tip Corner: Filenames and Storage

By Bill Sheff, Novice SIG Coordinator, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA

October 2011 issue, The LVCG Journal www.lvcg.org Nsheff (at) aol.com

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Rename Multiple Files at Once

Did you ever have a bunch of files, folders or pictures with similar names like DSC_12234? They are so uninformative. So I used to open Picasa and do a batch rename... it worked. But here is a simpler way without opening up another program. Highlight all the files/folder in question. Right-click, choose Rename and call it something that best describes them. For example, Family Picnic. Quick as a flash they are renamed to a uniform more meaningful name. The only thing I don't like is that the sequential numbers are put in parenthesis while Picasa allows you to set the numbering convention. Either way you get rid of files called File1, File2, etc.

Reformat A Flash Drive

I think this is a tip that is not really needed, however there might be some of you who are wondering if you have the capability of reformatting a flash drive. Well you do, and here is a reason you might want to. Lots of flash drives are formatted in FAT32. Today we know that a more space saving method is the format NTFS. So to pump up the drive to save a few more files you would want to change to the NTFS format. Actually, a flash drive can be reformatted the same way as any other drive.

As we know, when you plug in a flash drive your computer automatically assigns it a drive name and it looks like any other hard drive, so just go to "Computer", right-click on the drive, and then click on "format".

You then have some options. File type should be NTFS (or FAT32 if available). You can then assign a name to the drive, and finally you can decide if you want full or quick format. The full format will take a lot of



time and actually reformat the whole drive. The quick format just erases the File Index. It does not change any bytes on the drive, Then just click on "Start". When done the "format will say complete".

Now, here are a couple of caveats you should be aware of. If the flash drive came with certain programs, such as security or maintenance programs you might want to copy them to your hard drive during the format and copy them back over after the format is finished. A format destroys all data (or at least hides it from normal viewing).

Also, there is some thought that reformatting will reduce the life of your flash drive. Does it? By how much? Hard to quantify, and even harder to decide if that it actually does reduce the life of your drive. I really wouldn't worry about that.

Storing Important Files

While on the subject, which is better for storing an important file? Your computer hard drive? External drives? Or optical media such as CDs and DVDs? Where to store precious pictures or personal data is a serious question. How long will a disk or drive last? Will it fail? Will the medium become obsolete? (Anybody still remember floppy disks?) To answer this question, first we need to look at some of the qualities and limitations which the most commonly available storage formats present.

Storage Format: Hard Disk Drives

Pros: Large storage capacity for the price / Typically good lifespan.

Cons: Susceptible to malfunction due to mechanical failures and physical impact.

Inside your computer (desktop or laptop) is probably the safest place to store your hard drive(s), but doing so will not guarantee a trouble free experience. Why? There are just too many moving parts.

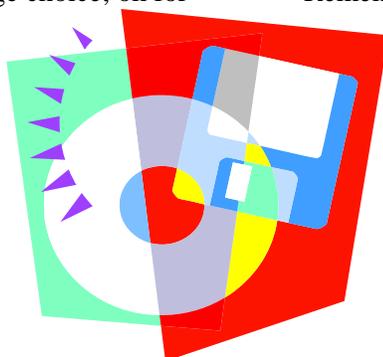
Inside the hard drive case are discs which spin as a mechanical arm which moves back and forth above the disc surface, reading and writing data to and from the platters beneath. While this method of data storage has worked for many, many years, there has always been one unavoidable fault which leads to inevitable failure of a hard drive...the aforementioned mechanical parts. As with any device which relies on constant and precise mechanical movement to run, hard drive parts eventually fail, usually taking your data to the grave with them. Due to the precision with which they operate, hard impacts may also cause a hard drive to read or write data in error, and possibly fail altogether as well. Despite these shortcomings, most hard drives have a life expectancy of at least 3-5 years, with many reportedly living a healthy life at 10+ years of age.

Storage Format — Optical Media (CD-R / DVD-R)

Pros: Inexpensive, portable

Cons: Inconsistent lifespan, temperamental storage requirements, data lost over time due to degradation

Optical media are quite handy for short term storage of data. However, they remain a less than desirable choice for long term and mission critical data archival. The reason is simple: everyday optical media degrades quickly and easily. Although many manufacturers claim their optical media will last for 30 years or more under perfect conditions, their actual lifespan with normal use and storage is typically closer to a few years (at most) than a few decades. There are many different factors which conspire against the lifespan of CD-R's and DVD-R's; sub-par dyes (the reflective portion of a disc where data is written) which degrade much sooner than rated, exposure to heat, cold, or sunlight which also degrade said dyes, and weak or wrongly calibrated optical disc burners which fail to write data as intended. All of these factors make every day optical media formats a less than favorable storage choice; ok for short term data storage, but definitely not the choice for long term backup of important information.



Storage Format: Flash Drives

Pros: Durability, Versatility

Cons: Debatable life span, higher price per gigabyte

The last decade has given rise to the newest consumer storage devices in this comparison: solid state flash (aka thumb) drives. Unlike the aforementioned storage mediums, flash drives use no moving parts or temperate dyes to store data, relying instead on electrical pulses to write data to a static storage chip. This method of storage allows for much higher shock resistance and durability, as well as smaller form factors and increased portability, than what is traditionally offered in a hard drive or CD/DVD.

The downside to this fantastic usability is a generally higher price per mega/gigabyte (i.e. for the price of a 32GB flash drive, you could purchase a larger portable hard drive with a terabyte (1000 gigabytes) of storage.) The life expectancy of flash drives is also up for debate, as the solid state memory used to store your data does wear out the more times you write to it. Good quality flash drives from well known, trusted manufacturers are typically agreed to have a life span of a few years or more, making the flash drive a good choice for your everyday data storage needs.

By now you're probably thinking to yourself "should I use any of these formats to store my data?" The answer is yes: use all of them. If you want to sleep soundly at night without worrying about your irreplaceable pictures, videos, documents, etc., regularly backup your important data on at least two sources; creating duplicates which will allow you to retrieve your important information should any one backup fail completely. And keep in mind, as newer methods arrive, such as BluRay disks or bubble memory or cheaper solid state drives, the older methods such as CDs and DVDs start fading away. As I asked earlier, "Remember the floppy drives?" I gave away hundreds of 5¼" floppies, and still have hundreds of 3½" drives. Anybody still have a drive to run them on??

Is Google Compromising Our Privacy?

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS www.compukiss.co sandy (at) compukiss.com

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Recently Google announced consolidating the privacy policies for all of its services. These include about 60 different services like the popular Google search engine, the Google-owned YouTube video website, Gmail, and the Android operating software for mobile phones. Because of the scope and popularity of these services, this move got the attention of everyone from state and federal representatives to advocacy and security groups. But more than anything else, it left consumers with a throbbing headache as they pondered how this would affect them and if they should be concerned enough to stop using Google services.

Data-protection agencies and lawmakers around the globe requested Google delay this implementation so they could review the new procedure but Google did not comply. The new privacy policy went into effect March 1, 2012.

Although Google states that this new privacy policy is aimed at making Google services easier to use, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that their primary aim is to target users with advertising that is relevant to their interests, making Google's ads more valuable. The aggregation of information from different areas enables Google to target the interests of their users more accurately. For instance, if you search for gardening information with the Google search engine, play videos of how to plant seeds on YouTube, and get brochures of the latest horticultural offerings in Gmail, Burpee and other seed and plant companies may be willing to pay Google more to blanket you with their ads.

If you are interested in gardening you might actually be happy to see ads for gardening tools and seeds, but this is not really the point. The point is that we are putting private information about ourselves in the hands of others. The problem lies in two areas.

First are the unintentional consequences. As we recently saw in the proposed SOPA and PIPA legislation, even acts made with the best intention can backfire creating more harm than good. When you add that

to the fact that technology is moving at the speed of light, we are becoming more and more data-dependent, and new ways to manipulate data are being invented every day, it gets a little scary.

Second, and possibly even more disturbing, is that power and money can corrupt even the most honorable people and companies. History tells this story over and over again. Google's informal corporate motto is "Don't be evil." Yet it was recently found that Google was circumventing the users' privacy settings in the Safari web browser. Even though the Safari browser was set to refuse tracking cookies, Google was adding hidden code that allowed it to implement browser cookies from third-party ad sites that Google operates. When this was made public, Google stopped the practice. But, other devious practices could be revealed or be implemented in the future. Believe me, this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Although Google's current proposed aggregation of data may be somewhat benign, what it will empower them to do in the future is problematic. With the use of data from mobile devices Google will be able to track our physical locations and actions. With data from our consolidated online profile they may be able to foresee our every move.

If you want a prediction of what this type of unseen tracking can do, check out the movie called "Antitrust." It was produced in the year 2000 when Microsoft was the big, bad, corporate entity. It shows what can happen when a company gets too much power, too much technology, and too much money. When you watch the movie, remember to add ten years of technology to the mix. In the year 2000 they didn't have the mobile technologies and data-tracking capabilities that we have now. If you watch this movie and really ponder how large and powerful Google has become, the throbbing in your head may become a much larger headache.



Facebook's Privacy Policy

By Constance Brown, President, Canton Alliance Massillon User Group, Ohio

March 2012 issue, The Memory Map <http://www.camug.com> Constanceb (at) camug.com

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Did you know that Facebook's privacy policy is more than 1300 words longer than the United States Constitution without the amendments? *That Facebook had 400 million registered users in May of 2010, half of whom login daily? That Facebook has ** 800 million users as of February 2012? That people spend more than 500 billion minutes there each month? How private are your communications on Facebook?

It used to be that you set up your privacy policy when you joined Facebook and could revise it from time to time. Now Facebook "has revised its privacy policy to require users to opt out if they wish to keep information private, making most of that information public by default. Some personal data is now being shared with third-party Web sites."

If you want to protect your privacy on Facebook, you have to engage a lot of buttons and select many controls. The new privacy policy itself is *45000 words long. To enjoy privacy you will need to press 50 buttons and make 170 selections. Not exactly easy and certainly time consuming. You will have to make sure to select to show information only "to me" or "to friends." You will not want to share with "friends of friends."

"Under the Account Settings option, in the Facebook Ads tab, two options are automatically turned on to share some information with advertising networks and friends. Anyone who wants to keep this information private must uncheck the boxes in that tab.

"Facebook has also added a feature, called community pages, which automatically links personal data, like hometown or university, to topic pages for that town or university. The only way to disappear from those topic pages is to delete personal data from Facebook."

**"Facebook does not sell user's information. They provide targeted advertisement.

From Richard Allan, Facebook policy director.

"Q. Do you ever think of selling any user information that's held in facebook? [sic]

"A. No... Facebook has a business model. We looked at it and there are three ways you can run a service like ours.

"You could charge people subscriptions. And we decided early on, we didn't want to do that and we never will. That we're not going to charge people to subscribe to the service.

"The second way would be to sell data. And we looked at that and said that's not a very good business model because nobody will trust you.

"So the third way is to show people advertising. So they can use the service freely, but they get ads on the page. And that's what we do. Those ads are targeted according to your age, interest, where you live... but the advertiser doesn't get the data. They get to show the ad to you.

"Richard Allan is a former Liberal Democrat MP, a UK political party with a position of cultural liberalism and civil liberty. Now he works for Facebook, which is at the centre of a contentious debate on what role sites of its ilk play in free expression and free speech.

*May 2010 New York Times

**Bitcoinmedia



USB 3.0—The Super-Speed Bus

By Andrew Petrovic, Ottawa PC Users' Group, Inc., Canada

February 2011 issue, PC News <http://opcug.ca/public/index.ht> [opcug-webmaster \(at\) opcug.ca](mailto:opcug-webmaster@opcug.ca)

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I thought that it would be a good idea to introduce to you a new and upcoming development - the USB (Universal Serial Bus) version 3.0, as this technology will become mainstream in a fairly short time.

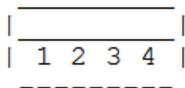
USB version 1.0 was created in 1996, but was more widely available in 1998 as version 1.1, superseded by version 2.0 in 2000. Over the next few years this will be replaced by version 3.0, already released and now being used by some consumers.

A Quick Overview of USB

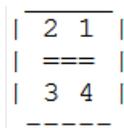
The reason that USB was created all those years ago was in order to provide an interface for computers and peripheral devices that was easy to set up and use, as well as being low-priced. Actually, the USB data protocols used are very complex, but fortunately the USB controller chips take care of these details, so users don't have to be concerned. USB is designed to be 'Plug and Play' without the user having to set up parameters such as interrupt requests, addressing, etc. as well as not having to reboot the computer after adding a peripheral.

In USB versions up to 2.0 there are only four wires that are connected: power; ground; data - and data +.

This is the 'A'-type connector usually found on a computer interface or hub:



This is the 'B'-type connector often found on the USB peripheral:



There are various other 'mini' and 'micro' connector types as well.

When we talk about USB components, we call a peripheral that plugs in to a computer port a 'device' and the port and controller associated with the port on the computer is called the 'host'.

Each device has a 'descriptor'. When a device is connected to a computer, the descriptor tells the host what kind of peripheral it is. From the product IDs it provides, the computer then knows what type of driver to load for that device. A driver is a small piece of software that interfaces between a hardware device and the operating system.

Other information passed to the computer includes the device's power requirements; protocol settings; etc. When a USB device is unplugged, the host instructs the operating system to unload the driver for that device.

As far as the user is concerned, the most important element of the upgrades to the USB technology is the increasing speed of data transfer. The following table shows the differences in data transfer speed between the versions. The theoretical speed quoted by manufacturers would, in reality, not be possible to achieve and is based upon operations that include extra packet transfer overheads, as well as a few other things. The real life actual maximum speed is likely to be between 30% and 60% of the quoted theoretical speed.

Version 1.1 had two speeds, 'Low' and 'Full'. Version 2.0 just bettered the 1.1 version 'Full' speed.

USB Version	Designation	Theoretical maximum speed
1.0	"Low speed"	1.5 Mbps = 190 KBps
1.1	"Full speed"	12 Mbps = 1.5 MBps
2.0	"High speed"	480 Mbps = 60 MBps
3.0	"Super speed"	4.8 Gbps = 600 MBps

Note the difference between Mbps (Megabits per second) and MBps (Megabytes per second). There are 8 bits in one byte, so when comparing speeds take note of which terminology you are using.

Limitations of USB 2.0

So if USB 3.0 is appearing on the market, it must be because previous versions are not able to do the job. Well, this is partly true. Version 2.0 will be able to be used for quite a lot of devices for a while, but as peripherals get faster and require faster interfaces, so USB 3.0 will become more desirable to end users. The sort of devices that are likely to require the faster data transfer speeds are external USB disk drives and components that deal with video.

It's not just speed that is a limit. Each USB 2.0 host port can provide up to ½ Amp (500 mA) of current to power a device that does not have its own additional power supply. Often this is simply not enough. Some external disk drives may require up to 900 mA of startup current and that is why they are often supplied with a 'Y' cable that plugs into two USB ports in order to feed enough power (for those portable drives that don't use an external power supply).

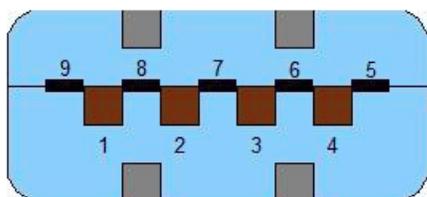
USB 2.0 data only moves unidirectionally. In other words, data can be sent to a device or from a device but not both at the same time. This cuts down the overall speed attainable.

Introducing USB 3.0

Whereas the upgrade from USB 1.1 to USB 2.0 used the same connectors with the same four wires, the upgrade from USB 2.0 to 3.0 is very much different.

Take the USB 2.0 configuration and add another entire set of connectors to it and call it 'Super speed'. This is how USB 3.0 has been created. The original USB 2.0 wires are still in place and the USB 3.0 adds five more wires (two pairs of data wires and a signal ground cable).

This is how the 'A'-type looks (Female - Receptacle), with pins 1 to 4 being identical to the original USB 2.0 specification:



Cables and connectors are backwards compatible as well, so you can plug in a USB 2.0 device to a USB 3.0 port - you just won't get any extra speed advantages because only the USB 2.0 connectors will be used, though the power pins are the same so more available current should be available for USB 2.0 devices.

How Is USB 3.0 Better?

Apart from being fully compatible with previous USB versions, the faster data transfer is quite a dramatic improvement for USB 3.0 compatible devices because of a faster clock control speed; the use of asynchronous signaling for simultaneous sending and receiving; and an interrupt mechanism that does not use the time-consuming polling that USB 2.0 used.

One area where USB 3.0 may fall down is with the length of the cable that can be used. It could be limited to 3 meters if high throughput devices are used, as compared to the 5 meter cables possible with USB 2.0.

The limitation could be overcome using USB hubs or extenders and perhaps fiber-optic cabling might be possible in the future.

Is It Worth Upgrading?

USB 2.0 will likely be around for the next few years anyway, but in time newer computer motherboards will provide USB 3.0 ports as standard.

If you want to try out the technology now, there are add-on adapters available that plug in to a spare PCI-Express slot on your PC and provide two or more USB ports. There are also a few USB 3.0 external disk drives available, as well as hard drive enclosures with USB 3.0 interfaces where you can put in your own internal drive.

If you only have slow devices on your USB connections, it's no great advantage to upgrade. For example, keyboards and mice only require the slowest USB version and will not work any better on faster USB ports.

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The Trouble with Terabytes

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

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

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

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

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Fairfax PATACS /OPCUG Joint Meetings

PATACS Meetings will be held on June 16 & July 21 from 12:30 to 3:30 pm. PATACS will hold joint meetings with OPCUG [www.olligmu.org/~opcug/] Meetings will be held at the **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute** [www.lli.gmu.edu/] at George Mason University, 4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax, VA, known as the Tallwood Campus.

Topics

June 16: The Library — Edifice or Interface
Sam Clay, Director,
Fairfax County Public Library

July 21: Introduction to Windows 8
Clay Robinson

You do not need to be a member to attend. For more information on WAC meetings and events, call the WAC AnswerLine (voice) at (703) 370-7649. Also see the Web Site at <http://www.patacs.org/>



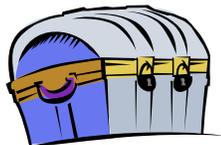
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(Continued from page 14)

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

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

*(Continued from page 13)*

If you must have the faster transfer speeds for storage or video devices, then you should consider some form of upgrade. There are alternate interface types, such as eSATA and FireWire, but they are a less common interface type than USB and they also require a separate power line, as well as not always being 'hot-swappable'.

Other things that will benefit from the USB 3.0 interfaces are card readers and connections from digital cameras, when transferring pictures to the PC, though not when you plug in the current 'slower' devices. USB 3.0 thumb drives will be faster on a USB 3.0 interface but the current USB 2.0 thumb drives will be no faster on a USB 3.0 port. Interestingly enough, USB 3.0 thumb drives will be faster on existing USB 2.0 ports because the whole USB 3.0 flash drives had to be redesigned with faster chip access in order to take advantage of the USB 3.0 port speed.

Later versions of Windows and Linux should natively support USB 3.0 at some point. Windows XP will not, but USB interface and peripheral manufacturers should be able to supply suitable drivers for XP systems.

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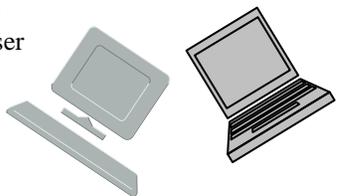
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Articles, helpful hints, and other items of interest to readers of the PATACS Journal are always welcome and will be published as soon as possible after submission. Priority is given to members' contributions. Articles may be submitted in MS Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) or plain unformatted text (C/R only at end of paragraphs, no indents preferred) via email to the editor nctcugbj@verizon.net

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Is no longer in operation. It has been replaced by the 'compucenter' mailing list at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/compucenter/>

If you are moving

Please send your change of address to the club address as soon as possible to avoid missing issues.

Thank You!

Carlin Hall Meetings

Watch your email and the web site, as details regarding renovations at Carlin hall are evolving. At this point, we believe that meetings will be displaced for the months of June, July and August for the replacement of windows, doors and siding. The construction may reveal concealed deterioration that needs to be repaired, and result in changes to the schedule noted above. Jim Rhodes and Steve Wertime are searching for replacement meeting space.



June-July 2012

1st Wed. (6/6, 7/4*)
7 p.m. General Meeting
*check online for holiday update!

2nd Wed. (6/13, 7/11)
**Online-Only Webinar using Skype
for information see club page at
<http://www.nctcug.org/webinarsig.html>**

4th Wed (6/25, 7/23)
7 p.m. Internet SIG

3rd Monday (7/16*; none in June*)
7 p.m. Board of Directors
*check online for updates!

Meetings are at **Carlin Hall**, 5711 S. 4th St.,
Arlington VA: East off of Carlin Springs Rd, just
south of Arlington Blvd/Route 50. See website for
directions to post-meeting pizza gathering.

!!!See announcement at left!!!

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