



PATACS Posts

Newsletter of the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society



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www.patacs.org

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Useful Bits & Pieces, February 2013

Lorin R. Garson, PATACS

Windows Lifecycle

Now that Windows 8 has now been available for several months, it's appropriate to think about how long Microsoft will support various versions of the Windows operating system—especially if you haven't upgraded to Windows 8 and you are wondering how long Microsoft will support your version of Windows. Microsoft has a 10-year minimum support plan. There are two different dates for end of support: (a) end of mainstream support and (b) end of extended support. Mainstream support generally goes for five years during which time changes in product design and features can occur, free security updates and hotfixes (patches) are available, and complimentary and paid support is honored. Extended support generally goes for an additional five years, which includes only security updates and paid support.

Version of Windows	Latest Service Pack	End of Mainstream Support	End of Extended Support
Windows XP	SP-3	April 14, 2009	April 8, 2014
Windows Vista	SP-2	April 10, 2012	April 11, 2017
Windows 7	SP-1	January 12, 2015	January 14, 2020
Windows 8		2017?	2022?

Extended support is only available to commercial customers, although security updates seem to be available to consumer customers. The table below shows dates of support expiration for various versions of Windows. For more information from Microsoft, see <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/products/lifecycle> and <http://support.microsoft.com/gp/lifepolicy> for Microsoft's policy in depth; it is rather complex.

When should you upgrade Windows? Certainly when you buy a new computer, unless there is some compelling reason not to. When mainstream support ends may be a good tipping point. Other reasons may be if the new version of Windows has features you like or if there is software you want to use that doesn't work

well or at all on your current version of Windows. When extended support is no longer available it would be prudent to upgrade, but by that time you are probably using an obsolete computer anyway.

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Linux and Open Source News

By Geof Goodrum, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society [linux\(at\)patacs.org](mailto:linux(at)patacs.org)

Linux Steam Client Beta Now Available

After months of rumors, Valve Software (<http://www.valvesoftware.com/company/index.html>) officially released a beta version of their free Steam client application for the Ubuntu 12.04 and 12.10 GNU/Linux operating systems (<https://wiki.ubuntu.com/Valve>), in addition to established clients for Microsoft Windows and Apple MacOSX. As described by about.com (<http://internetgames.about.com/od/tweaks/a/steamprofile.htm>), “It is a free stand-alone program which provides a wide range of game-related services including game downloads, server browsing, instant messaging, friend lists, automatic game patching, and more. Steam has grown at a dramatic rate over the years, and is generally considered the market leader in digital distribution for games.”

Although Valve boasts access through Steam to over 1,800 game titles from Valve and other game studios, as of December 2012 there are only forty-one games that run on Linux (<http://store.steampowered.com/browse/linux/>). Linux gamers believe Steam will encourage more game publishers to produce commercial games for Linux. However, there are concerns that Steam’s dominance in the market could reduce competition. Another suggested downside is downloaded/online games cannot be resold like used games on physical media.

Featured Linux Software of the Month February 2013

The software described below can be downloaded at the links provided or copied onto a USB flash drive at the PATACS Fairfax meeting. However, please check the online package management tool included with your GNU/Linux distribution first, as installation is often just a click away.

calibre – v0.9.12. <http://calibre-ebook.com>. Free GNU General Public License 3.0 source code and executable packages for GNU/Linux distributions, MacOSX, and Windows. calibre is an application that provides e-book management services including: Library Management with download of e-book cover images and information from the Internet; E-book conversion supporting all major e-book formats (23 input, 17 output, DRM not sup-

ported); Syncing to e-book reader devices including smartphones and tablets; Downloading news from the web (over 300 sources, including New York Times, WSJ, Time, and Newsweek) and converting it into e-book form; Comprehensive e-book viewer; Content server for online access to your e-book collection via web browser or mobile device. Requires glibc 2.10 or later, xdg-utils and Python 2.6 or later.

Conquests – v1.2.1. <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/mark.harman/conquests.html>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executable packages for Ubuntu/Debian by Mark Harman. Conquests is a turn-based 4X Civilization-like 3D strategy game. You can discover new technologies from the stone age to the space age, explore the world, and wage war on your opponents. It supports both Direct3D and OpenGL graphics.

Features:

- ▶ Ability to create your own maps, as well as play on supplied or randomly generated maps.
- ▶ Scriptable AI, using Lu.
- ▶ Significant portion of the game setup can be modded, via the Lua scripts.
- ▶ Choice of 2D or 3D viewing modes. Supports zooming in/out. Hardware accelerated.
- ▶ Help tooltips on all GUI buttons; in-game reference guide.
- ▶ The game focuses on the fun aspects rather than the tedious.
- ▶ Efficient air and naval transport and combat - the player can select where to attack or transport units to immediately.
- ▶ No pollution! No senate or war weariness! No city disorder!
- ▶ Rather than simply having a generic “city production”, cities also need to obtain elements in order to build things: Wood, Stone, Bronze, Iron, Gunpowder, Oil.

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Backup! Backup! Backup!

By Ira Wilsker

Websites:

- <https://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-backup-program>
- <https://www.techsupportalert.com/content/best-free-online-storage.htm>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incremental_backup
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Differential_backup
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continuous_data_protection
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_online_backup_services
- <http://wiki.r1soft.com/display/TP/Categories+of+Backup+Software>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image_backup
- <https://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-data-recovery-file-undelete-utility.htm>
- <http://www.grc.com>

I am fully cognizant of the level of frustration and anger when a hard drive or other mass storage device fails. While I am personally careful to keep contemporary backups of all of the critical data on all of my computers, all too often I receive calls of despair from individuals whose computer “crashed” and they are convinced that they have lost all of their important information. In some cases the alleged “crash” is not really a catastrophic hard drive failure, but a recoverable error or problem due to either hardware or software issues. Any mass storage device can and will fail, including hard drives (internal and external), USB devices, SSD (Solid State Drives), CD and DVD discs, and other devices

Sometimes the problem can be quickly and inexpensively resolved by replacing a hard drive controller that failed, replacing the battery in the BIOS on the motherboard, or reseating a cable that had worked loose from long-term minor vibration. Some apparent “crashes” are due to software issues including malware (viruses, worms, trojans, etc.) that corrupted the FAT (File Allocation Table), MBR (Master Boot Record), or critical sectors on the hard drive; most of these can be repaired with some effort and appropriate software.

Sometimes apparently dead hard drives have corrupted or damaged sectors that were caused by some anomaly or a mechanically failing hard drive; I have had some occasional but apparently miracu-

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- ▶ Any foot soldier can build roads, rather than having to have specific worker units. Foot soldiers can also attack enemy units or cities directly by sea. Thus there is an advantage for building a mixed army of foot units and strong units, rather than just the latter.

JStock – v1.0.6x. <http://jstock.sourceforge.net>. Free GNU General Public License Java code for all platforms by yccheok. JStock has watchlists for twenty-six world stock markets, and provides an intraday stock price snapshot, a stock indicator editor, a stock indicator scanner, and portfolio management. JStock uses delayed public stock data from Yahoo! Finance. JStock can generate SMS/email alerts based upon customizable indicators.

Kernel Source – v3.7.1. <http://www.kernel.org>. Free GNU General Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.

Comparison [edit]

Provider	Win	Linux	Mac	Android	iOS	Encrypted storage	Personal Encryption	Linked	Unlinked	1GB	Unlinked	Hot	P2P	Types	Random
								200 GB	plan	plan	plan	data			storage
Acronis	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	200 GB	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	
ADrive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No				Yes	Yes, only paying users	No	No	
ADrive	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Optional		Yes	Yes			No		
ADrive	Yes	Yes (only 32 MB)	Yes			No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes			No	Yes	Yes
WebStorage	Yes	No	Yes			Yes	Optional		Yes		Yes		No		Yes
Backblaze	Yes	No	Yes			Yes	Optional		Yes		Yes		No		Yes
Backblaze	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	No	No for per computer	No	Yes		Yes	No	Yes	
Bitcasa	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Bitcasa cannot decrypt data, but users can request decryption rather than personal encryption		Yes		Yes		No	Yes	Yes
Box	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					Partial	Full users only
Dropbox	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					Partial	Full users only

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lous success using an old program, “Spinrite” (www.grc.com) which has a reputation for recovering apparently dead hard drives that had bad sectors on the drive. There are several free software utilities that can explicitly recover data from some damaged CD and DVD discs, USB drives, and other devices (techsupportalert.com/best-free-data-recovery-file-undelete-utility.htm).

Much of the fear and angst of a crashed drive or other mass loss of data can be averted if the user created and maintained a contemporary backup of all critical data. The “peace of mind” that a good backup provides is priceless. In my case, when I evacuated for a series of highly destructive hurricanes, most recently Rita and Ike, one of the first items that I packed was one of my external hard drives that had a current backup of all of my important files. Victims of those storms, as well as others including Katrina and Sandy may have suffered a grievous personal tragedy, but recovery can be eased somewhat by knowing that important information has survived and is available for use as needed.

Locally, I helped some people with flood ravaged computers re-enter the cyber world with minimal inconvenience because they had good backups of their data. Some of the people were more concerned about losing baby and grandchildren photos, family movies, and other personal remembrances than they were losing business and tax records. A good backup would have made all of those items quickly and easily recoverable.

It seems that almost everyone is aware that they need to backup their files, but many (most) users do not perform that often simple task. There is a wide selection of backup items available, typically at a reasonable cost, especially when considering the cost, financial and emotional, of losing that data. As I type this, I

have one of two external USB hard drives attached to my computer. Periodically I swap external drives, connecting one and placing the other in a small watertight container in a small fire resistant, locking box. With this redundancy, it is not likely that I will lose any significant data in the event of a crisis situation.

The cost of this level of security is moderate, as each large capacity USB hard drive (1.5TB and 2TB) cost well under \$100 each, or about a nickel per gigabyte. The price of high capacity external drives has been declining; the two that I am using are currently advertised online and at some big box stores for about \$70 to \$90 each; this weekend, one local big box store advertised a name brand 750MB external USB drive for \$39!

While external hard drives are arguably the most popular backup mass storage devices, there are several other popular options. There are many so called “online” backup services, ranging from free to expensive, that allow the user to upload files to a remote server for backup purposes (techsupportalert.com/content/best-free-online-storage.htm). Google, Microsoft, Carbonite, TrendMicro, and many other services are available that provide this service. Many of the security suites, better known for comprehensive malware protection, now also include a large amount of online storage along with their security services, typically from 10GB to 50GB.. Wikipedia has a recently updated (November 18) list and comparison of the features of the various online backup services at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_online_backup_services.

Some people prefer to use other devices to backup their data, and they are perfectly adequate for that purpose, subject to their obvious limitations. Almost all computers now have a built-in CD or DVD burner. Since blank CD and DVD discs are relatively

Best Free Backup Program

Updated 4. June 2012 - 13:46 by Ritbo

Other Language?

 [Read this article in Spanish](#)

In a Hurry?

 [Go straight to the Quick Selection Guide](#)

Introduction

Dear reader: Having tested several dozen different backup utilities I have discovered there are a lot of different opinions among both developers & users about how backup programs should be built and function. It is apparent that when it comes to backup programs there is no such thing as “one-size-fits-all,” because everyone’s backup needs are different. Because of this, the programs reviewed below will attempt to focus on what I believe the needs of the average user are. The main things I am taking into account for the top recommendations are as follows.

- Ease of use. (Simplified GUI -- Easy to understand terminology -- Wizards that help select commonly backed up files -- , etc.)
- Good balance of functionality and features without over burdening the user.
- Ability to “set it and forget it,” as much as is possible. (Must have a

Incremental backup

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

An **incremental backup** is one that provides a backup of files that have changed or are new since the last incremental backup.^[1] It is one that backs up only the data that changed since the last backup — be it a full or incremental backup.^{[2][3][4][5]} An incremental backup is a backup of latest changes since the last backup (any level) so that when a full recovery is needed the restoration process would need the last full backup plus all the incremental backups until the point-in-time of the restoration.^[1] Incremental backups are often desirable as they consume minimum storage space and are quicker to perform than differential backups.^[7] The purpose of an incremental backup is to preserve and protect data by creating copies that are based on the differences in those data and thus minimize the amount of time needed to perform the backup. With incremental backups, successive copies of the data contain only that portion which has changed since the preceding backup copy was made.

Differential backup

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A **differential backup** is a type of data backup that preserves data saving only the difference in the data since the last full backup. The rationale in this is that, since changes to data are generally few compared to the entire amount of data in the data repository, the amount of time required to complete the backup will be smaller than if a full backup was performed every time that the organization or data owner wishes to back up changes since the last full backup. Another advantage, at least as compared to the incremental backup method of data backup, is that at data restoration time, at most two backup media are ever needed to restore all the data. This simplifies data restores as well as increases the likelihood of shortening data restoration time.

cheap, often less than 20 cents each when purchased in spindles of 100, they are a popular and cost effective media for backup purposes. While cheap, thin and lightweight, their primary limitation is the fact that they are generally only recordable once (the “RW” or Rewritable media is slow, more expensive, and approaching obsolescence), and have a limited storage capacity. Without using any of the common compression formats, such as “Zip”, a CD can hold up to about 700MB, and a DVD can hold 4.7GB of data. These are fine for recording data files, but are generally too small in capacity for some types of backups.

Increasing in popularity as their prices plunge, USB flash drives (also called “thumb drives”) have become widely used as backup media. When on sale at the local big box stores or online, USB flash drives are well below a dollar a gigabyte, with many about 50 cents per gigabyte; recently 16GB flash drives were in the \$10 range, and 32GB drives were under \$20. USB flash drives are physically small, hence extremely portable. The downside of using flash drives is that while most of them are reliable, there is a moderate failure rate of the devices, which could result in loss of data if not redundantly stored on another device. Flash drives have a limited number of read and write cycles which, while high, may be reached if the drive is heavily written to and subsequently read. Despite their shortcomings their size and price make them attractive for this purpose.

While native PC (or Mac) utilities can be used to copy files and directories directly to backup media, this is somewhat labor intensive, provided the user remembers to manually create and maintain the backups. There is a wide selection of free and commercial software available to create and maintain backups (techsupportalert.com/best-free-backup-program). For years I have been using NTI Shadow (currently version 5) to create and maintain my backups. It was these Shadow backups that I took with me when evacuating from the hurricanes. Shadow automatically creates a backup of data files of all types, including documents, photos, movies, tax data, spreadsheets,

Power Points, and other forms of data, and continually checks for any new files or changes to existing files (incremental and differential backups), and backs them up within moments of creation or modification. Shadow does not backup (by default) program files because they must be installed, rather than simply copied back. Sadly, NTI is discontinuing Shadow, which has served me so well over these many years.

Alternatively, there are many reliable backup utilities, many of which are free (techsupportalert.com/best-free-backup-program), and offer different types of backups. While most backup utilities will create and automatically maintain data file backups, some users prefer to periodically create and update an image file, which is a digital image of the hard drive. In the event of a catastrophic hard drive failure, a new hard drive of equal or larger capacity is installed in the computer, and the image file is copied to the new hard drive. It often requires a bootable CD to enable the installation of the image file from the external device, and most of the image backup software can also create that bootable recovery CD. Once the image is installed on the new hard drive, the computer boots and looks just like the now defunct hard drive had never failed, as it is an exact copy of the old hard drive. Some of the better backup utilities will create an image (a huge file) and then automatically create a series of incremental update files such that the backup is up to date, allowing the restored image (if necessary) to also be up to date.

Murphy’s first law of computing states, “A properly backed up hard drive will never fail, but the first time there is not a current backup, the drive will always fail at the most inopportune time!” I see that my currently connected 2TB backup hard drive light is flashing, indicating that it is instantly saving an updated copy of this file as I save it to my computer’s internal hard drive. I will be unhappy if my internal hard drive were to fail, but the remorse will be short lived as I will be back in operation quickly with minimal aggravation, as I always have a current backup of my data files as well as an image of my entire hard drive. There is absolutely no reason not to have a good backup of at least your critical data files. It is not a question of “if” your drive will fail, but a certainty that it will eventually fail. It is far better to be prepared for that inevitable day than face the pain of losing all of your important files.

Disk image

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
(Redirected from Image backup)

“CD image” redirects here. For ISO 9660 image files, see ISO image.

A **disk image** is a single file or storage device containing the complete contents and structure representing a data storage medium or device, such as a **hard drive**, **tape drive**, **floppy disk**, **optical disc**, or **USB flash drive**. A disk image is usually created by creating a complete **sector-by-sector** copy of the source medium and thereby perfectly replicating the structure and contents of a storage device. Some disk imaging utilities omit unused file space from source media, or compress the disk they represent to reduce storage requirements, though these are typically referred to as **archive files**, as they are not literally disk images.

Disk image file formats may be open standards, such as the **ISO image** format for optical disc images, or proprietary to particular software applications.



Have Fun and Learn With PAINT

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November 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor www.spcug.org jimcerny123 (at) gmail.com

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Feed your creative side! Learn a little about computer graphics.

I've always liked the Paint program—it comes free with Windows. Sure, there are other drawing and graphic programs you can use, many of them free on the internet, but since everyone who has Windows has the Paint program, you might want to know a little about it. To open Paint on your computer click on the "Start" button in the lower left of your screen, then move your mouse to "All Programs" and a list of your computer programs will be displayed. Scroll down to the "Accessories" folder and click on it. In the list of programs in the Accessories folder find "Paint" – click on it once and it will open. You can play with Paint and make your own drawings and you can open a photo in paint and then draw or put text right on the photo. But before we do that, let me tell you why I like the Paint program and why I think it is worth your time to learn about it.

Paint is an excellent program for new computer users because it can teach you some basic computer commands for doing graphics. You can draw and work with shapes, colors, lines, pictures, and more. But the important thing is that what you learn in Paint will come in handy in many other graphic programs. Paint is also an easy program to learn on your own by using its own "help" option. When you open Paint (in Windows 7), click on the little blue circle with the tiny white question mark in the upper right corner of the window (or just hit the "F1" key on your keyboard). Then click on the article title you want to learn about.

I suggest starting at the top and read all the sections if you have not used Paint before. Don't worry, the entire help article is not long and you can read it all in less than a half hour.



But you really need to actually do what the instructions tell you so that you will build up your computer skills. The program is simple enough to learn easily and it will introduce you to some great computer graphics. But, on the other hand, Paint is limited in what it can do. For example, it is not intended to be a complete photo editing program by any means.

Play with Paint for a while and learn how to draw and change shapes. Select different colors and draw some lines, circles and squares (to draw perfect circles and squares, hold down the "shift" key while you drag your mouse to create the shape). Try selecting different brush types – you can select oil or water color, for example, or crayon or marker. Notice how you can see "through" some colors to the others underneath (Paint prior to Windows 7 does not have this feature). Now draw a text box by clicking on the text tool which is a capital letter "A". In the box will be the insertion point ready for you to type your text. You can make the box "transparent" or "opaque" and move it wherever you want. Make a mistake? – just click on the "undo" arrow, the small blue arrow curving to the left at the very top-left of the Paint window.

One thing Paint can do is allow you to put text right in your photo. If you click on "help" you will see the "Adding text" title – click on it to learn how. But let me step you through this, one step at a time (in Windows 7), to introduce you to this:

- 1) Open the Paint program (see instructions above).
- 2) Click on the dark blue rectangle in the upper left of the window. This used to be the old "file" menu but in Windows 7 the word "file" is gone. (No, I don't know why they removed the word "file"!).

- 3) Click on “Open” which will display a window in which you can find the photo you want to work with in Paint. Click on the photo and click on “Open” at the bottom right of the window. The photo will now be in the Paint program window – but wow—look how big it is!
- 4) Why so big? Well, I guess the Paint program is used to dealing with images with fewer pixels, but it’s no big deal – let’s zoom out to see the whole image at once. Click on the “View” tab and then click on the “Zoom out” tool until you see the whole image in the window. Now we can work with it much more easily.
- 5) Click on the “Home” tab and then click on the “Text” tool – this is the large capital letter “A” in the “tools” section of the Home tab ribbon. You are now ready to draw a rectangle in which you will type your text.
- 6) On the photo, drag your mouse (hold down the left mouse button) to draw a rectangle. If you draw it in the wrong place, just move it to where you want by dragging it with your mouse. You can also change the size of the rectangle by dragging the little white “handles” at the corners or sides. Try it!
- 7) When you draw this rectangle, the “Text” or “Text tools” tab is opened for you. This is where all the text editing tools are, and there are not that many.
- 8) The “insertion point” is already in the rectangle ready for you to type your text – but wait a second, where is that insertion point again? It is in the upper left of the rectangle you drew, but it may be VERY tiny! Can you even see it? The Paint program had no idea how large your photo was going to be so the larger (i.e. more pixels) your photo is, the smaller the font will appear. Remember, we zoomed out to see the whole photo. So, get the font larger by clicking on the little black arrowhead next to the number in the “Font” tool area and pick a big number, say “72” and see how big that is. You can enter numbers larger than 72 if you want by using the keyboard.
- 9) Select a color for your text. Pick a color from the color pallet that will stand out on the photo, such as yellow. Just click on the color you want and that color should then appear in the “Color 1” box. This will be your text color.
- 10) You can select other text options if you wish, such as bold, italic, or a different font. Also, select if you want your text box to be transparent (my choice) or if you want it to be “opaque” (that is, to have a background color). The background color will be the color in the “Color 2” box which you can change if you want by clicking on that box. If your text color and the background color are the same, you will see no text!
- 11) After you type your text you can still move the box to where you want by dragging it. Once you click outside the box, that’s it, your text is now part of the photo and the box is gone. If you make a mistake, just click the “undo” blue arrow at the top left of the window and you can try again.
- 12) Save your photo with a NEW NAME. Click on the blue rectangle again (the old “file” menu), move your mouse to “Save as…” and then click on your file type (probably “.jpg”). In the window that opens, pick the folder into which you want to save your photo and enter a good name in the name box. Click “Save”. If you do not give it a new name it will replace your old photo which will be lost.

I think you will enjoy using the Paint program, let it bring out the artist in you. While you are drawing your masterpiece, you will be learning some very helpful computer skills. Computer graphics can really do some amazing things and there are several programs free on the internet if you want to do more. So have fun and get colorful!





Windows 8 – A First Look

From the HAL-PC, Texas, Senior Learning Center www.hal-pc.org

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups;

Since Windows 8 looks and acts differently from Win 7, it is the subject of many questions, and possible misinformation. Volunteer teachers are busy discovering as much as they can, as fast as they can so they can be a knowledgeable resource. Below is a summary of what they have learned thus far, which would be relevant for their Senior Learning Center audience.

The new Windows 8 operating system was designed for use with multiple devices such as Windows phones, laptops, tablets and desktops which may or may not have touchscreens. Basically it is a new user interface or UI that runs on top of an “improved” Windows 7. Programs, now called apps, appear as active tiles/icons and applications (apps) such as you might see on a smart phone display. At one time this opening screen was called the “Metro” interface. The vertical group of icons on the right, dubbed the Charms bar, provides access to “Searches” at the top and to “Settings” at the bottom. One of the tiles is labeled Desktop (lower left). When clicked, it reveals a familiar, yet different XP or Win-7 desktop view with the familiar Windows Explorer (now called File Explorer) and Control Panel. It does incorporate the “Ribbon” interface which was introduced with Office 2007. However there is no Start button.

Versions Of Windows 8

There are several variations of the new Operating System (OS) for consumers: (1) Win-8, (2) Win-8 Pro, and (3) Windows RT. Windows 8 and Windows 8 Pro will run any current software on Win-8 PC desktops, laptops, net books, and some tablets. The main differences between these two systems are that Win 8 Pro accommodates Windows Media Center and also will allow encrypted back-ups. It is considered the “business” version. Windows RT will only run on Microsoft's new Surface tablet and other tablets that PC firms are developing in competition with Surface. As with any tablet, the Surface will not run current Microsoft software such as Office 2010, or 3rd party software such as picture editing programs like Adobe Elements. However, a new Office 2013 is included with the purchase of the Surface tablet. All other apps must be downloaded from the Microsoft store, a la Apple. Other vendors will eventually have competing hardware and pro-

grams that will run with and on Surface. It should be noted sometime after the first of the year Microsoft will be coming out with the Surface Pro which will be more like a net book or any other small portable computer.

Programs Apps

As previously mentioned, there is no Start Menu with Win-8 as with previous Microsoft OS's produced since Win-95. There is a “Start Screen” on which programs are displayed as “apps” (applications). Example: Office 2010 Word, Excel and Power Point will be displayed as separate apps as will be 3rd party programs. Since these run on the desktop side of Windows 8, they are now known as “Desktop Apps”. Depending on your hardware, they are called into use by a touch or by mouse click to the desired icon on the Start Screen which will take you to the Desktop side. Features found in Win-7 Accessories, such as the Calculator, WordPad, Paint and Snipping Tool are now found as apps. Several features available in Win 7 have been deleted. Examples: Gadgets, Aero Glass, DVD Maker and Flip 3D. Some may be still available as apps from the Microsoft store.

Upgrading

Those who are considering upgrading their current OS to Win-8 will find that a single upgrade disk will upgrade XP, Vista and Win-7 regardless of the version. The upgrade package contains both 32 & 64 bit disks. When upgrading it will let you know which disk to use.

And In Conclusion....

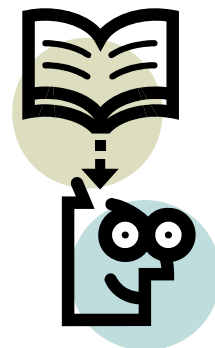
It's important to understand that Win-8 is a work in progress just as all operating systems have been in the past, whether it be MSOft, Apple, or Google's Android. What we know about Win-8 will undoubtedly change as we move into 2013. Please stay tuned.

As a last note, if you shop for a new machine, do not be surprised if you receive different answers to the same question asked of the sales force at the local retail stores. Everyone is faced with a learning curve with Win-8.

Windows 8 – What You Need to Know

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Recently Microsoft released a new version of its operating system. Unless you've been living under a rock, you've already heard about Windows 8. So today I'm going to give you the facts – just the facts....focusing on what you will need to know about Windows 8.

First, all versions of Windows 8 have a new interface, which is radically different from any previous versions of Windows. The traditional start menu is gone. Now when you start your device you see a colorful conglomeration of squares and rectangle called "tiles." These are not small squares like you might see on an iPhone or iPad, but are rather large. You touch or click on these tiles to launch programs and/or apps. Some of the tiles are "live" meaning that you can set them up to see real-time information like the weather, stocks, email, or news.

I can assure you that when you start using Windows 8 you will be stymied as to how it all works. So be sure to allow yourself a little time to investigate the new operating system. It may take a few weeks before you feel comfortable with the new interface. Yet, after using Windows 8 for a few months, I can also tell you that that this version is far superior to Windows XP or even to Windows 7.

The second thing that you need to know about Windows 8 has an underlying interface that is very similar to the Windows 7 desktop. In Windows 8, it is simply called "Desktop." You can switch to this Desktop at your discretion (just click on or touch the Desktop tile). You will be switched to the Desktop automatically if you start a program like Notepad, Word, Excel, etc.

You might have heard that Windows 8 is made for touch screens and that is true. Yet every finger motion has a corresponding mouse and a corresponding keyboard motion. So it can also be used on a regular computer. I have used Windows 8 on a computer with touch screen and also on a computer with only a

keyboard and mouse. It is very workable on both.

The third thing that you need to know is that Windows 8 comes in four flavors: Windows 8 Phone, Windows 8 (called RT) for tablets, Windows 8 (standard), and Windows 8 Pro. The Windows 8 Phone works only on smartphones and will come preinstalled. The Windows 8 Pro offers extra data protection, remote desktop, and the ability to join corporate domains. It will mainly be used for businesses. So you, as an average consumer, only have to worry about two versions, RT and the standard version, which is referred to simply as Windows 8.

The RT version will come preinstalled on certain tablets. You won't be able to upgrade to it. Windows 8 will come on almost all new computers and, if you have a newer computer or laptop, you will be able to upgrade your computer to Windows 8. Windows 8, however, will also come on some tablets and laptop-like computers. That's where the confusion lies.

If you purchase a tablet you will have to know if you are purchasing a tablet with Windows 8 RT or Windows 8 because there is a big difference between the two. The colorful new interface is the same on both and both can run the apps that can be found in the Microsoft app store. The biggest difference is that RT can run only Apps. It cannot run desktop applications like Photoshop, Quicken, and Family Tree Maker. Yet Microsoft has been very smart about this. They have developed their main Microsoft Office 2013 programs as Apps. In fact when you purchase an RT tablet, Microsoft Office Home and Student Preview Edition comes preinstalled. When the Final version is released, it will automatically be downloaded and installed at no cost. So while the RT version can't run full-blown programs, it can run Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote and actually comes with all of these. The Office Apps automatically appear in the Desktop interface that

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looks like Windows 7. If you have used any of these Office programs on your Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7 computer, they will look and feel pretty much the same. Of course there will be some new features, but most of the features of the older desktop versions of these Office programs are available in the Apps. The two exceptions that I found were that the App versions of Office don't support macros or add-ons.

If you purchase a new computer with Windows 8 or the Windows 8 upgrade, which is currently available online through Microsoft for \$49, you will not get Office for free. You will either have to make that a separate purchase or use an older version of Office that you already own. (Microsoft says older versions, even those as old as Office 2002 will work fine with Windows 8.)

Besides the new interface, Windows 8 boasts some key improvements including longer battery life for portable devices, faster boot times, and a smaller memory footprint. Most full-blown programs that run well in Windows 7 will also work with Windows 8 (not with Windows 8 RT). Once you are used to Windows 8, you will probably find it easier to navigate than previous versions of Windows. So there are many reasons to upgrade or to purchase a new computer with Windows 8 preinstalled.

Making the move to Windows 8 will be beneficial, but there is a learning curve, especially on a non-touch desktop or laptop computer. Also, with Windows 8 RT completely based on Apps, the number of Apps available in the Microsoft App store is very important. Right now their store has only about 7,000 Apps in the Microsoft store compared to 100,000 in the Apple App Store. While some of the major Apps like Evernote and Kindle are already available, others like Words with Friends and Angry Birds are not. Of course, if Windows 8 is popular, the number of Apps is sure to increase dramatically and quickly. Because of the learning curve and the wait for Apps, I expect that acceptance of Windows 8 may be slower than expected.



Text Messaging or "Texting" Have You Tried It Yet?

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If you're under 20, you probably know all of this, and if you're over 60, you probably think you have no need for texting (unless you want to keep in contact with someone who is under 20), so for all of you in between, here goes. Texting is a very interesting, and relatively easy, way to communicate with others, using your cell phone.

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

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-P Sleepy, SLAP Sounds like a plan, TGIF Thank god it's Friday, TG2BT Too good to be true, U2 You too.

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



To “Cloud” or Not To “Cloud,” That Is The Question

By Joan Frerichs, CIACUG Board Member www.ciacug.org ciacug@ciacug.org

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I’d heard of saving computer files to the “cloud,” but I really didn’t know very much about it until our April CIACUG meeting when David Williams provided members with a great deal of helpful information about how it works.



If you have never had your computer “crash,” be destroyed in a fire or flood, be struck by lightning, or stolen, you have been exceptionally fortunate, or, perhaps, you haven’t been computing very long. After spending many painstaking hours of inputting data, contact lists, medical histories, financial information, etc. on our first computer, we experienced a crash that lost all of that data forever. Many times you toss or shred the paper trail thinking your information is safe forever. How naive can one be? It can be an “oops moment,” or it can be devastating. We had to consider ours an “oh phoo moment” and move on with life and start over, and that is disconcerting, to say the least. If you have business information and customer lists on your computer, it can put you out of business temporarily, at the very least.



If you’ve been backing up your files to an external hard drive, what if that is destroyed in a fire? If you’ve been religiously backing up your data to disc times two, putting one in the fire safe (not very safe) and taking one to an off-site location, that gets time-consuming and cumbersome. The easy solution...back it up to the “cloud.”

If you are a non-business user, there are several cloud servers that give you a certain amount of free storage, and it was pointed out that it is a good plan to review the sites to see what they have to offer and then choose a couple that you feel fit your needs and you are comfortable with probably being around for the long-term. There have been servers that have “disappeared” in the past without ample warning for users to recall their data. Thus, it’s a good plan to save the same data on more than one cloud server. If you are a business user or require more space than the free allotment, there will be a charge. With some servers you can increase your allotment by “recommending” their service to others, and if they should decide to sign on with that service, you may then be allowed additional storage space.

The next step is to set up your accounts, organize your files, save your files to the clouds and then synchronize your pc, your laptop, your iPad, etc. so that any changes you make to any of your saved files will automatically be updated on all your devices. That’s a time-saving plus. Also, you are able to access those files in the cloud from any web-based hardware that has access to the internet. You can also share data files, photos, etc. with friends and family. Be sure to remember, or write down, your user names and passwords.



Cloud Computing

Having secure access to all your applications and data from any network device

Following are some links to websites for comparison purposes:

20 Clever Apps and Services That Make Great Use of the Cloud

<http://bit.ly/JydzvV>

Comparison of online backup services

<http://bit.ly/5P003Z>



Cloud Drive Comparison

<http://rww.to/j2FUHl>

The “Top Best Cloud Storage Companies” Reviewed!
www.thetop10bestonlinebackup.com/cloud-storage

15 Best Free Online Data Storage & Backup Services
<http://bit.ly/rQGb1p>

Listed below are some of the free cloud storage servers and the amount of free storage:

DropBox 2 GB www.dropbox.com

Windows Skydrive 7 GB skydrive.live.com

BOX 5 GB www.box.com

Google Drive 5 GB drive.google.com

SugarSync 5 GB www.sugarsync.com

ASUS Webstorage 2 GB www.asuswebstorage.com

Wuala 5 GB www.wuala.com

Apple iCloud 5 GB www.icloud.com

Amazon Cloud 5 GB www.amazon.com/clouddrive

Google Music play.google.com/music

You might also be interested in checking out the following:

TonidoSync www.tonido.com

LiveMesh download.cnet.com/Live-Mesh-2011/

Social Folders socialfolders.me

Insync www.insynchq.com/

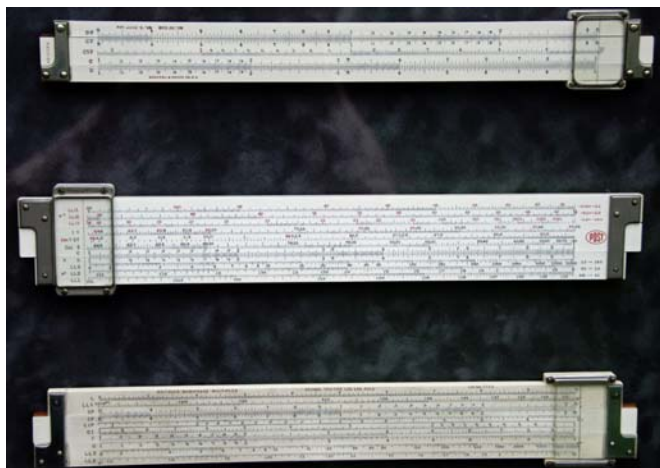
Teradesk www.teradesk.net

Now, get organized and SAVE, SAVE, SAVE
 (TO THE CLOUD). It can keep you safe and sane.

(Continued from page 1)

Unusually Versatile Disk Drive

Akitio has come up with a disk drive called a “Cloud Hybrid” that provides a wide variety of features: (a) an external drive using USB 3.0, (b) a network attached server (NAS) connected to your network with an Ethernet cable, (c) an iTunes music server, (d) support for numerous devices such as Xbox and PlayStation, and (e) a Web portal for remote access. The price? About \$100. However, this does not include a SATA internal disk drive which must be purchased separately and installed. Reviews have indicated drive installation is simple: remove three screws and hook it up. See <http://www.akitio.com/network-storage/cloud-hybrid> for more information and <http://gcn.com/Articles/2012/07/16/Review-Akitio-Cloud-Hybrid-SATA-drive-cloud-server.aspx?Page=> for a useful review.



OpenPuff

Take a look at the picture of three slide rules. Look carefully because it contains a secret message. Can you see it? You can't of course.

The process by which messages can be hidden in “plain sight” in pictures, videos and other objects is called steganography (see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steganography>).

OpenPuff is a free tool that enables you to hide sensitive data inside images, audio files, and video files. Secret data can even be chained across multiple files. In addition to hiding data, the program can also be used to apply an invisible digital watermark to a number of file types, allowing you to prove ownership or verify file integrity. The software is easy to use with a somewhat self-explaining interface, but it does require a little practice to feel comfortable in using the application. See <http://download.techworld.com/3328471/openpuff-40> to download OpenPuff.

Oh, what's the secret message? It is “This message is for Zogg from planet Krypton 212 in the Large Magellanic Cloud. We are sending you a shipment of DDT which you should add liberally to any food purchased at fast food restaurants. This will considerably enhance the flavor. Keep in touch. Poly Styrene”

The original “secret message” was contained in a .txt file and was encrypted and embedded in the .pdf file that was a photo of the slide rules. Extracting the secret message from the created new .pdf file (photo plus secret message) is also accomplished using OpenPuff, which generates the original .txt file containing the secret message. Sending the photo as an e-mail attachment or on a CD, thumb drive, etc., would not raise suspicions as it looks like an ordinary photo. Experts at the NSA, CIA or similar agencies would almost certainly be able to tell the photo had been tampered with, but the ordinary misanthrope would not.

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If you are moving

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

Thank You!

Upcoming Meetings

Saturday February 16, 2013

Speaker: David L Haase

**Topic: Keeping Financial Records:
A How-To for the Cloud Era**

Microcenter Clinics

See <http://microcenter.com/site/stores/instore-clinics.aspx>
for the latest news on these free clinics.

**Saturday, Feb. 2 & Sunday, Feb. 3, 2 p.m.
BYOPC Product Selection and Build Demo**

**Saturday, Feb. 9 & Sunday, Feb. 10, 2 p.m.
The New Office**

TEMP-RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PATACS Meeting Information

Call 703-370-7649 for meeting announcements or visit web site at <http://www.patacs.org/>

Free Admission — Bring a Friend!

Arlington Meetings

(temporary location until further notice —
check the PATACS.ORG web site for news!)

Walter Reed Community Center
2909 S. 16th St, Arlington VA 22203
<http://www.patacs.org/arlingtonmeetings.html>

General Meeting

1st Wednesday (2/6) 7pm

Technology and PC Help Desk (SIG)

4th Wednesday (2/27) 7pm

Board of Directors

3rd Monday (2/18) 7pm

Fairfax Meetings

(with OLLI PC User Group)

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)
4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax VA 22032
<http://www.patacs.org/fairfaxmeetings.html>

General Meeting

3rd Saturday (2/16) 12:30pm

Online-Only Webinar using Skype

2nd Wednesday (2/13) 7-9pm
<http://www.patacs.org/webinarpat.html>

