

Useful Bits & Pieces

by Lorrin R. Garson

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Defect in Updating Windows 8

Some users are reporting that it takes hours for updates to download and install on their Windows 8 systems. The problem apparently is not that downloading takes hours but rather there is a defect in the Update dialog box; the progress indicator isn't working properly. The solution seems to be to allow a "reasonable amount of time" (say 15-30 minutes) for the downloading to complete, cancel the update, reboot and the Windows 8's Restart button will display "Update and restart". Select "Update and restart" and the successfully downloaded updated files will be installed normally. Hopefully this issue will be resolved when Windows 8.1 is released, if not sooner.

Microsoft Process Monitor

Most people are aware of the Windows Task Manager, which can be used to monitor applications, processes and services that are running on your computer, as well as performance and networking activity. However, you may not be aware of Microsoft's Process Monitor (v3.05), which can be downloaded from [http://technet.microsoft.com/en-](http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb896645)

[us/sysinternals/bb896645](http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb896645). Process Monitor is an advanced monitoring tool for windows that shows real-time process activity in great detail, including Registry activity. This utility can be very useful in tracking down problems.

Windows Mobility Center

Do you use a laptop? If so, you may wish to take advantage of Windows Mobility Center (WMC), which you probably have never heard of. This useful utility offers a convenient collection of utilities we all commonly use. The figure on the next page shows WMC for a Sony VAIO laptop; WMC can vary from manufacturer to manufacturer.

You can invoke WMC by (a) keying the Windows Key+X or (b) left-clicking on Start, typing "Windows Mobility Center" and left-clicking on "Windows Mobility Center" when it appears.

WMC is included with Windows 7 Home Premium and up, Window 8 Pro and Windows RT. Unfortunately it's disabled on desktop PCs.

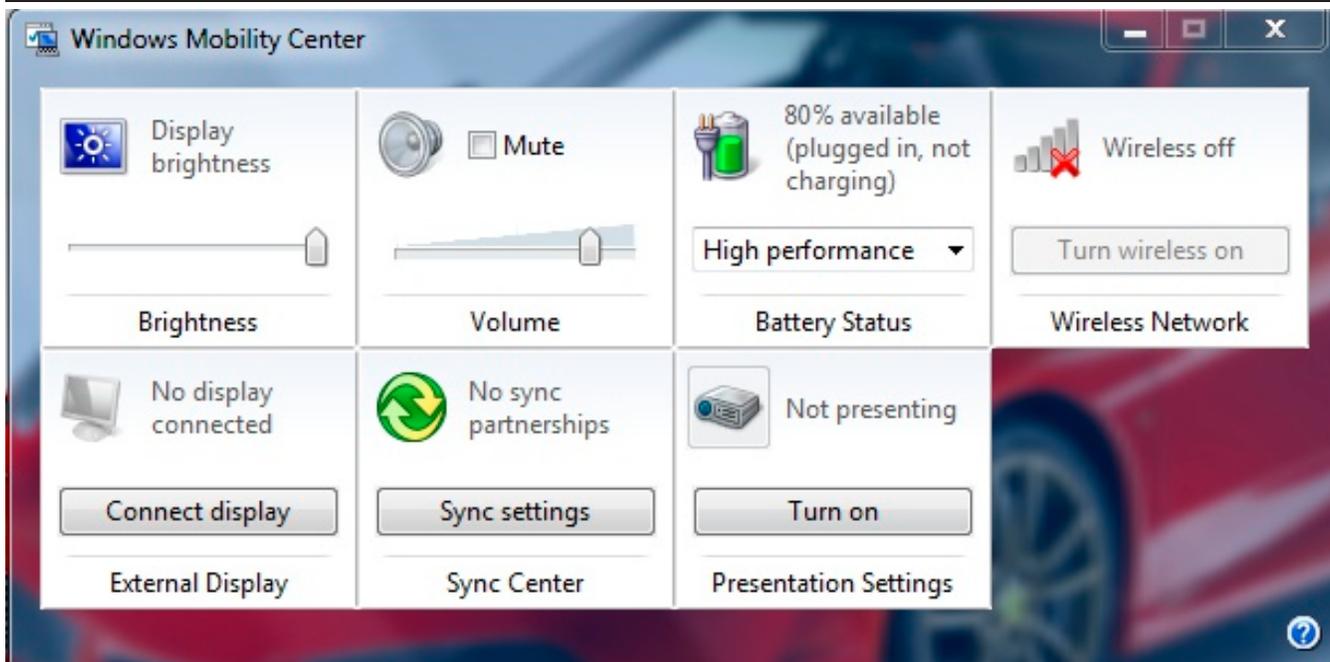
The Challenge of Touchscreen Laptops

Perhaps one of the unforeseen challenges with touchscreen laptops (and Windows 8) is that when you touch the screen, it wobbles and the whole laptop can be moved. This generally necessitates holding on to the laptop screen with

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Windows Mobility Center

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one hand while poking at the screen with the other. An awkward way to use a computer. Toshiba has released a pair of upscale Ultrabooks called the Kirabooks, the Kirabook I5 (\$1,799.99) and the Kirabook I7 (\$1,999.99). See http://www.toshibadirect.com/td/b2c/ebtext.to?page=kirabook&src=MAXG&cm_mmc=SEM_Direct_Google_KSL_Kira#products that helps with this problem. *Popular Science* (July 2013, p. 14) reports that changing the typical 2-mm hinge to a 5-mm hinge obviates the need to hold on to the screen. Some reviews are less sanguine about this. I guess it depends on how forceful a poker you are.

Managing Passwords

Do you have 2-3 passwords that you use for dozens of logins? Perhaps you have dozens of passwords that you have written on Post-it notes or pieces of paper that you put in in your desk or stick on corners of your monitor. Or possibly you are more systematic in your approach and store your passwords in a Word or Excel file on your computer. None of these schemes, or numerous similar scenarios, are good practice. It's trouble with a big "T" waiting to happen. What alternatives are there?

If you do store your passwords in a Word file, encrypt the file and don't name it "Passwords.doc". Pick a strong password and your information is reasonably safe. Microsoft Word and Excel 2007 and more recent versions of Office use 128-bit AES encryption, which will keep out all but the really determined. Older versions of Office have weak encryption and are generally considered insecure. See <http://www.howtogeek.com/howto/microsoft-office/secure-your-private-word-2007-documents/> for more information on how to secure Word and Excel documents. However, storing passwords in Word or Excel files isn't the most useful way to deal with the issue.

Specialized software will not only store your passwords with strong encryption but will also log you in to Web sites requiring IDs and passwords, fill in forms for you, generate random passwords for your use, etc. Careful evaluation of functions and features and seeking product review is time well spent before selecting a specific product. Here is a selection of applications for managing passwords that you may consider (no recommendation or endorsement is made or implied):

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1. **DashLane:** This utility is available for PCs, Macs, the iPhone and Android smartphones. See <https://www.dashlane.com/passwordmanager>. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLxLZNFVUE> for a brief YouTube video.
2. **IronKey Personal USB Drives:** These are rather pricy flash drives, not software, on which strongly encrypted files are stored. See <http://www.ironprotector.com/>. See <http://www.ironprotector.com/IronKey-s200-d200.asp> for a comparison of products' features. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLDHPfwngRg> for a YouTube video.
3. **Kaspersky Password Manager:** A solid product with generally good reviews. See <http://usa.kaspersky.com/products-services/home-computer-security/password-manager>. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3qo0pNRY6Q> for a YouTube video.
4. **LastPass:** This is a free utility for Windows machines with a wide variety of features. A premium version is available for \$12.00/year but most people will find the paid version unnecessary. See <https://lastpass.com/>. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXwdzWaf4RI> for a cute YouTube video which typifies password managers.
5. **Roboform:** Available for both PCs and Macs. The free version allows for storage of up to 10 logins. See <http://www.roboform.com/> for product details and pricing. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oi8gnaxY80s> for a YouTube video.

It's **essential** that whatever tools you use to manage passwords that you pick a strong password for the tool itself. See the item "Are Your Passwords Adequate?" in Useful Bits & Pieces in the **PATACS Posts** for October 2012.

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Password_manager for a discussion of password managers in Wikipedia.

Linux and Open Source News

Sources of support for Linux, open source software

by Bill Wayson

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January issue, The Outer Edge
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An important responsibility of any user of computers and technology is knowing where to get help. This month I will (again) discuss some of the places users of open source software can find help and how to identify whether or not the help offered is any good. There really is no shortage of people and places willing to provide support, most of which welcome people willing to help others. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

The Internet

The best source of support for Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) is the Internet. The Internet is where members of the open source community (which includes you, the user) meet. The Internet is the one open forum that can provide real-time feedback on FOSS as it is updated and patched. Tap into this knowledge base through your favorite Web search site. Creative search terms, such as an error message, can result in just the solution you are looking for.

The types of information you will find fall into three categories: FOSS-oriented sites; FOSS vendor sites; and FOSS mailing lists and discussion forums. Many FOSS-oriented sites are great gateways to FOSS information. Try Linux Online (www.linux.org) and LinuxQuestions.org (www.linuxquestions.org). Many more sites like these exist, and each deserves a look. One that merits special attention is The Linux Documentation Project (www.tldp.org). This is the home of the HOWTO collection, a community-maintained FOSS documentation project. Topics covered there range from setting up a three-button mouse to a Web server. Some HOWTOs may be a bit old, but others actively follow the latest developments.

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Most companies that create and distribute Linux have their own websites. If you search on Linux Mint, openSUSE, Red Hat, or Ubuntu, you should be able to find their home pages easily. Usually you will find links to knowledge bases, support forums, and bug tracking. Purchasing a vendor's official Linux distribution usually entitles you to toll-free phone and email support, and access to reserved web sites.

Searches for support will invariably return links to messages in mailing lists and discussion forums. The online forum, basically an online conversation, has become a standard support offering of almost all providers of software. People post their problems in the hope someone can help and will post the answer. These postings and solutions are immortalized in an archive of the discussion. Find a good one and make it a regular online hangout.

On Your PC

Linux installations include a great deal of documentation on Linux itself and FOSS. If you have installed the source code for Linux, you'll find information in `usr/src/linux/Documentation/`. The information there can be helpful if you are having trouble with a specific piece of hardware. Application documentation can be found under `/usr/share/doc`. This information will range from very terse to extremely deep. You may also find HOWTOs installed under here.

You may find "Help" icons on your Linux desktop or application menu—most distributions include a help system. And don't forget the "man" (short for manual) and "info" (short for information) pages.

Use a terminal window under Linux to enter the command "man man" and "info info" to get started. The man system is the traditional source of application and utility reference information. The newer info system, which is slowly replacing it, sports hyperlinks and better document organization.

User Groups

User groups can be great sources of information and support. CIPCUG has its Linux SIG. Nearby are the Simi/Conejo Linux Users Group (www.sclug.org) and the Ventura County Linux Users Group (www.vclug.org). A trip to one of their meetings could be worthwhile. To find other user groups, simply search for "linux user group" and a city. This is sure to return results for any city of any size.

These groups often have very good websites and mailing lists, and I have never had a problem joining their mailing lists.

Magazines and Books

A trip to the computer section of any large bookstore will offer you many, many books that cover all sorts of subjects that are Linux- and open source-related. Books give you the ability to learn at your own pace. Some series to look for are the O'Reilly books, the SAMS Teach Yourself in 24 Hours series, and No Starch Press books. Before you go to the bookstore, think of three or four real questions that you have. Look at several books and see how easily and understandably your questions are answered, and choose the book that does this the best. Also look for magazines that cover Linux, like Linux Magazine (www.linuxpromagazine.com) and Ubuntu User (www.ubuntu-user.com). These are sold at the larger bookstores.

Information is there just for the asking. It is true that there are very few instances of "1-800-LINUXHELP" support, and most of these cost money. But once you start using the resources described above, you will discover that there is no shortage of support for, and information about, Linux and other FOSS. As you become comfortable using these resources, the perception that you are on your own when you use Linux and FOSS will fade and disappear as a reason to not give Linux and FOSS a try. It all starts with looking.

Featured Open Source Software of the Month: September 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.

C-Dogs SDL – v0.4.5.

<http://cxong.github.io/cdogs-sdl/>. Free GNU Lesser General Public License source code and executable for Linux, Android and Microsoft Windows by Cong. C-Dogs SDL is a port of the old DOS arcade game C-Dogs to modern operating systems. C-Dogs is an arcade shoot-em-up that lets players work alone or cooperatively during missions, and against each other in the “dogfight” deathmatch mode. The original DOS version of C-Dogs came with several built in missions and dogfight maps, and this version is no exception. The author of the DOS version of C-Dogs was Ronny Wester.

Suricata – v1.4.5. <http://suricata-ids.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code for Linux, Microsoft Windows, and Apple MacOSX and executable packages for CentOS, Ubuntu and Debian Linux and Microsoft Windows by the Open Information Security Foundation and supporting vendors. Suricata is a high performance Network Intrusion Detection System (NIDS), Intrusion Prevention System (IPS) and Network Security Monitoring engine. The engine is multi-threaded and has native IPv6 support, file extraction capabilities, and many more features. It’s capable of loading existing Snort rules and signatures, and supports many frontends through Barnyard2.

Sweet Home 3D – v4.1.

<http://www.sweethome3d.com/index.jsp>. Free GNU General Public License Java source code and executables for Linux (32 and 64 bit), Microsoft Windows, and Apple MacOSX by Emmanuel Puybaret/eTeks. Sweet Home 3D is an interior design application that helps you to quickly draw

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C-Dogs SDL screenshots





Sweet Home 3D. Floor plan, 3D perspective and rendered image views

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the floor plan of your house, arrange furniture on it, and visit the results in 3D. Features include:

- Draw walls and rooms upon the image of an existing plan
- Drag and drop doors, windows and furniture from a catalog onto the plan
- Update colors, texture, size and orientation of furniture, walls, floors and ceilings
- View all changes simultaneously in the 3D view from any view point
- Create photorealistic images and videos with various light sources
- Import additional 3D models and export plan at various standard formats

Talend Open Studio for Data Quality – v5.4.0M1. <http://www.talend.com/products/data-quality>. Free GNU General Public License Java and SQL code for Linux, Microsoft Windows, and Apple MacOSX by Talend. Talend Open Studio for Data Quality helps you to profile your data. The ergonomic interface allows you to define metrics (indicators) and collect statistics on your data in a few clicks. It comes with a set of regular expressions that helps you to identify bad data. You can create your own regular expressions and use them in data profiling analyses. A lot of options exist for each indicator, which change the behavior of the indicator so that it gives you more pertinent information. Data quality options on indicators alert you when your data quality is not what you expected.

Kernel Source – v3.10.4.
<http://www.kernel.org/>. Free GNU General

Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.



The Gadget Corner

by Steve Baer

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February 2013 issue, Island Computing

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Aqua Mail—A Versatile Android Email Client

I have been using and traveling with an Asus Transformer Infinity TF700 Android Tablet (running Jelly Bean 4.1.1) for several months now and still love it. (I also still use and travel with a borrowed Ipad2, and also find it quite good.) One thing I like about the Asus Tablet is that it comes with an included tablet based email client (from a Company called XCome) that can collect email from all my mail systems (2 ISP and 1 Gmail). This very nicely emulates the way the various Microsoft email clients that I use work in XP, Vista and Windows 7. It has one problem however—when you are sending an email it is not possible (on the fly) to change the mailbox that you are sending an email from. For example, if you receive an email on a Hargray account and hit reply, the tablet mail client will automatically send it from that same Hargray account, and not let you change it. (It appears that the original XCome client had the ability to change sending accounts at this point, but it was disabled in bringing it to the Asus tablet.)

That is OK at home. But because of the way Hargray operates their email system, they will

bounce the reply if you are traveling and located in a non-Hargray domain such as a distant hotel. Hence, I have to switch senders before I can reply to that incoming mail and use a non-Hargray account. (For those interested, I wrote about this Hargray quirk and a work-around in a Gadget Corner several years ago. I can send a copy if anyone wants it.)

I spent some time searching for Android Email clients that permitted dynamic sender selection and found several well reviewed ones. After a bit of looking, including user comments, documentation and support, I decided to try the top one resulting from my Search - Aqua Mail (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.kman.AquaMail&hl=en>).

The almost full version is available free. It is limited to 2 email systems and has a small advertisement in the signature line. For \$4.95, you can upgrade to the Pro version, which eliminates the limit of two systems, and the advertisement.

After about a week of use, I have found that it does everything I want. It installs and sets up easily, can POP3 or IMAP mail from existing servers, permits dynamically changing the sending email system (the feature I needed), and works intuitively.

One thing I really like is that it is useful almost immediately with good default settings, yet has a vast array of controls for when you get more confident and really want to tinker.

There is a very good video on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2vzuELEBXA) showing many of its features in operation on a Galaxy S3 phone. That video helped me decide to try this system. I am currently using the Pro version with 2 Hargray and 1 Gmail accounts.

By the way: Whenever I am in search of new hardware or software gadgets I usually check the reviews and comments on Amazon, and search for any videos on Youtube. These are both tremendous research tools.

Second by the way: The 4.8" Galaxy S3 phone in the video above looks awesome! Over the

holidays I used a Galaxy Note II phone with a 5.5" screen, and can now see that my next phone will be large! A 6.1" version is rumored. These things, which seem to be an emerging cross breed between a phone and a tablet, are called Phablets.

Watching Movies in Hotels

We did a lot of traveling recently, and I noticed that frequently we are back in our hotel room by 8-9 PM, staring at a large flat screen TV with dozens of channels of junk to watch. I thought to myself: "All those new hotel TVs have accessible HDMI ports. I should be able to plug my tablet into it and watch movies of my choice." As with many facets of entertainment video however, the technology part of the problem is the easy part. There are many other things that will impede your goal. To explore the topic, I started to try to find answers to the simple question: Given that I usually carry a tablet and a bit of electronics on a trip, how could I legally watch movies of my choice on the hotel TV?

When I work on a complex topic like this, I find it useful to assemble everything I know and don't know in some sort of organized table, and then try to fill in the blanks. The table on the next page—a work in progress—is my second draft attempt at this. In reviewing an earlier version via email and at an HHICC Geeks lunch, several methods that I had missed were suggested. Many thanks to club members, especially Hugh Dinwiddie. Also, thanks to Harold Hauer, who kindly volunteered to run the very useful test data shown in item 2. Hopefully this early version of the table will be useful and stimulate additional data and ideas. While my focus was hotel TVs, many of the techniques below will also be useful in home setups. I hope to update this chart later in the year based on your inputs and new industry developments.

As I indicated, there is no easy solution, but there seem to be lots of interesting gadgets to watch. I'll plan to update this table later in the year.

Some interesting devices and rumors have come out of the CES show. For example, the Panasonic

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Table 1 – Overview of Methods for Watching a Movie of Your Choice on a Hotel TV

Method	Comments
1. Pack a small DVD player to hook to hotel TV.	Pros: Easy and requires low preparation – just throw discs in suitcase at last minute. Low cost players start around \$25. Simple. Independent of bad or no Wi-Fi connection at hotel or on a ship or airplane. Cons: Adds 1-3 pounds plus some bulk to suitcase.
2. Rip your own movie to memory and watch on tablet, or pipe from tablet to hotel TV.	Pros: No extra weight or bulk since tablet is on trip anyway. Should be legal under fair use of your own disc. Independent of bad or no Wi-Fi connection at hotel or on a ship or airplane. Cons: More time and pre-preparation steps before trip to decode and assemble selected DVD to memory. In an experiment run by Harold Hauer, using a 3.4 GHz Intel Core i7 Mac and Handbrake software, it took a total of 43 minutes to decode and move a 2 hour and 7 minute commercial DVD to his iPad 2. Unless tablet has HDMI output, additional hardware will be needed to get to TV.
3. Google Play or iTunes rental, etc.	Pros: 30 days from the time of rental to watch your movie, and 24 hours (in the US) or 48 hours (elsewhere) after you've started viewing to finish it. If pre-download, independent of bad or no Wi-Fi connection at hotel or on a ship or airplane. Cons: Must watch within 24 hours from start - a potential problem for long movies that you might want to watch over 2 nights. Unless tablet has HDMI output, additional hardware (i.e. Apple TV) will be needed to get to TV. Somewhat limited choices of movies.
4. Small portable DVD optical drive for tablet.	Pros: None. Small USB connected DVD drives available, BUT, see Cons below. Cons: Will not work for encrypted commercial movie DVD's per rules of the DVD Forum. (My guess is that the issue is a fear of piracy.) Thus, requires method 2 to decrypt. In that case, use of a memory stick or pre-load takes less bulk/weight than an optical drive.
5. Media Hub/Player (E.G. Samsung SE 208 BW, a DVD Player that WI-FI streams content to tablet or phone.)	Pros: Easy and requires low preparation – just throw discs in suitcase at last minute. Independent of bad or no Wi-Fi connection at hotel or on a ship or airplane. Software for Android and IOS available. Cons: Small, but adds weight and bulk to suitcase. Reported complex setup. WI-FI may not be useable in airplanes.
6. Roku or equivalent*	Pros: Independent of tablet and can stream from online services (see method 3 above) if reasonable speed WI-FI is available. Higher end Roku model can accept USB stick and hence also use method 2 above. Cons: Weight, Bulk

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DMP-MS10 and DMP-MST60 have Roku-like capabilities while being able to use Miracast, which lets Android mobile devices (some devices using Android 4.2 or higher) stream content directly to the box like Airplay. It is my estimate that Roku will not give up this market.



Right: Roku 2 media streaming device

Flight Delays and Real Time Flight Tracking

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<https://www.aa.com/i18n/urls/mobile.jsp>

<https://www.aa.com/notify>

<http://flightcaster.com>

<http://www.wunderground.com/flights>

<http://www.intellicast.com/Travel/Flying/Default.aspx>

Recently, I had to fly to Fort Lauderdale International Airport (FLL) to attend a professional meeting. I was scheduled on a morning flight out of Jack Brooks Regional Airport (BPT), arriving at the airport well before the flight. Check in and baggage check went quickly and smoothly as I awaited the boarding call for my flight. I was flying American Airlines from BPT to DFW to FLL, and had previously signed up for the free text alerts from American Airlines which gave gate information, updated departure times, baggage pick up locations, and other useful information. As I was awaiting the boarding call, I received a text message on my smart phone informing me the outbound flight would be delayed, and gave an updated departure time about 30 minutes later; several minutes later the counter attendant made the same announcement over the PA system. Not too concerned about catching my connecting flight at DFW, I settled in for the short additional wait, only to receive another text message on my phone informing me of an additional hour delay; this time, it was about 10 minutes later that the check in counter made a similar announcement regarding the delay. Now it appeared that I would miss my connecting flight at DFW, a fact not lost upon many of the other travelers on my flight who descended en masse to the counter to check on their connecting flights. While concerned about missing my scheduled ride from FLL to the conference hotel, I did not have to join the throngs at the counter as I had the American Airlines app on my smart phone, which indicated that I would make the second connecting flight to FLL with no problem. Trepidation set in as another text message from American Airlines

indicated another departure delay, which implied that my connecting to that next FLL flight was now in doubt, and that the next DFW to FLL flight would arrive at Fort Lauderdale too late to attend the meeting's opening dinner event.

When finally starting the local boarding process, hours late, a text message informed me that my original flight from DFW to FLL was boarding at that time, and gave the gate information at DFW; obviously I would be missing that connecting flight. A quick check of my American Airlines app gave me information on the next flight to FLL, but now the projected arrival of my flight from BPT, as stated in still another text message, indicated that if we landed at DFW at the projected time, I would have less than 15 minutes to catch the connecting flight at DFW several terminals away. Fortunately, I made that second connecting flight to FLL, arriving three hours late, missing my airport pickup. As soon as I turned on my phone at FLL, a text message from American alerted me of the carousel that should contain my bag; I was relieved that my luggage also made the short connection. An earlier text message, sent while in-flight, indicated that my original flight landed at FLL on time (without me on it), and provided the gate and baggage pickup information.

While it is common for flyers to encounter flight delays, the information provided by American Airlines via text messages, and their smart phone app, helped to alleviate some of the distress as I was able to instantly be informed as to flight status and possible connecting flights. As a frequent flyer on several airlines, it is now the rule, rather than the exception, that the major airlines offer free text messages regarding comprehensive flight information as well as dedicated apps for most smart devices, as well as a dedicated website optimized for mobile browsers.

While there are some variations between the smart device apps, they generally offer many of the same features and functions. Most of the airlines have free apps that will run on Android devices, iPad, iPhone, Windows Phone,

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BlackBerry, Nook, Kindle, and possibly other devices. These apps are linked on the airline websites or can easily be found by going to the appropriate app store for your device, and searching for the airline by name. For those who have internet connected smart devices but do not have their airline's app, a mobile optimized version of the airline webpage will either be automatically displayed in the mobile browser when entering the regular web address of the airline; almost all airlines dedicate a mobile friendly website with the prefix "mobile." before their normal web address, such as mobile.aa.com for American Airlines.

I have tried several of the Android apps for the major airlines, and of those I tried, all seem to be intuitive, feature rich, and well designed. Common features among the major airlines provide for the user to check flight status, view or change existing reservations, access frequent flyer accounts and benefits, perform flight check in, make seat selection, display a digital boarding pass, provide baggage pickup information, display terminal and airport maps, view local weather at the destination, and other helpful information.

For those who prefer the simplicity and convenience of common text messaging, the airlines offer a variety of free SMS (text messaging) services for travelers; while the airlines do not charge for the service, smart phone users need to be aware that there are still many mobile phone accounts that charge fees for text messaging. Generally, the airlines offer three types of text messaging service; the first, is a direct, automated reply to an inquiry about gates, times, baggage claim and other requests. The airlines each have a simple address to send direct text inquiries; for American Airlines the address is "FLYAA" or 35922. The second type of SMS or text service offered by most of the airlines is a "One Time Flight Notification" which can be used for self-notification or can be sent to friends and family. For those without smart device access, these notifications can also be sent by email or by voicemail. This level of notification may contain flight information (such

as revised departure and arrival times), gate information, and baggage claim locations. These onetime notifications can also be used to automatically alert the list of recipients (including yourself) of any last minute schedule updates, gate changes, and flight changes. The third primary type of notification service is a free "Flight Status Notification" subscription, that automatically generates comprehensive flight information notifications by SMS text messaging, email, or voice mail, simply created and scheduled automatically as a part of the booking and reservation process (this feature does not work on some of the third party travel booking websites and services). As with the onetime service, comprehensive flight schedule, gate, last minute flight changes, delays, and baggage information will be sent according to the prearranged settings created by the traveler. Most of the airlines allow members of the frequent flyer programs to create a notification list that will automatically notify selected members of the contact list to receive updated flight information.

There are also some excellent third party websites and apps that can be used to track flight status and location, and provide information about flight delays. One of my favorites is FlightCaster, at flightcaster.com. Available as a web service or as an app for iOS devices (iPhone and iPad), BlackBerry, and Android, FlightCaster is different from most of the other flight tracking utilities in that it claims to predict flight delays up to six hours before the airline officially announces flight delays! FlightCaster claims that it can provide these advance warnings of flight delays because it uses and analyzes multiple sources of data, often more comprehensive than those used by the airlines themselves. Some of the sources utilized by FlightCaster to make its long-term projections of flight delays include Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the FAA Air Traffic Control System Command Center, FlightStats, and the National Weather Service.

For a limited time, the official FlightCaster app is currently free in the iTunes store for iPhone and iPad devices. There are two versions available for

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Android devices; Flight Predictor Lite which is a limited free version, and the paid version of Flight Predictor (\$1.99) which offers more comprehensive information, and is not limited to the number of flights that it can track. There are several other flight trackers listed in the respective app stores; one that I have used is FlightView Free Flight Tracker, which offers real-time flight tracking, flight status, maps showing the flight location and route information, airport delays, and other information; flight information can be easily shared with others. While I have been satisfied with the free version of FlightView, there also are a pair of paid versions including the 99 cent FlightView Flight Tracker which does not display ads like the free version does. The last is FlightView Elite Flight Tracker (\$3.99) which provides much more comprehensive flight information, as well as real-time views of the arrival and departure boards at major North American airports, flight status alerts, flight integrated weather maps, airport delay information, and other relevant data about current and future flights. Another very comprehensive free Android app is Airport (All) Flight Tracker which offers flight tracking, live arrival and departure boards from the major airports, terminal maps showing amenities (restaurants, parking, ground transportation, Wi-Fi hotspots, and more), flight delays and cancellation notices, flight rebooking service, remote check-in for most airlines, baggage claim, seat assignments, and much more. Airport (All) Flight Tracker is different from most of the other flight tracking apps in that it provides extensive coverage of international flights and airports, while most competitors only cover domestic flights.

The major weather websites, including WeatherUnderground (wunderground.com/flights), Intellicast (intellicast.com/Travel/Flying/Default.aspx), and Weather.com also provide real-time information on airport delays with some flight information. There are also plug-ins for Google Maps, Google Earth, and other online mapping services that can display real-time flight tracking and other information.

With the abundance of free and nominally priced apps from the airlines and third parties, it may be possible to ease many of the stresses of air travel.



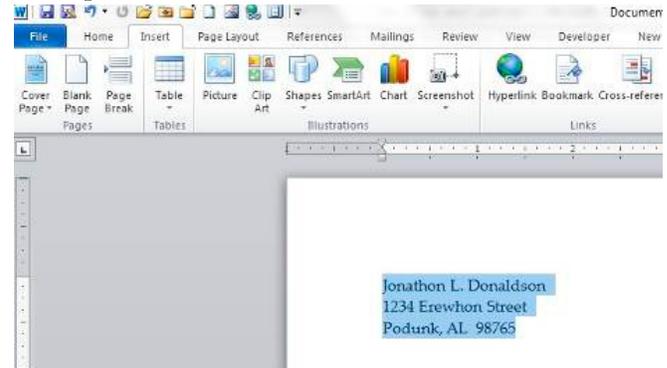
How to Use the Microsoft Word 2010 Quick Parts Feature for Reusable Content

by Mike Layton

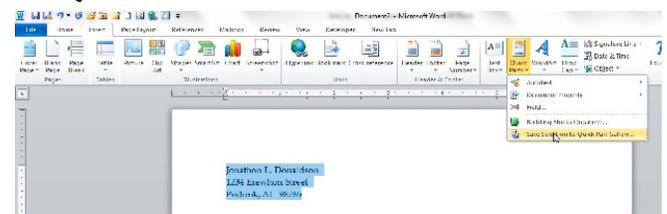
Mikesnsltrcntct (at) gmail.com

One Example is Name and Address for Letters

1. Type your name and address the way you want it, and then highlight that text. For example:



2. Click on the Insert Ribbon (Tab) and then on the Quick Parts tool:



3. With the text highlighted, the “Save Selection to Quick Parts Gallery” option will be available. Click on that option.

4. You will see the “Create New Building Block” window:

The dialog box is titled 'Create New Building Block' and contains the following fields and options:

- Name: Jonathon L.
- Gallery: Quick Parts (dropdown menu)
- Category: General (dropdown menu)
- Description: (empty text box)
- Save in: Building Blocks.dotx (dropdown menu)
- Options: Insert content only (dropdown menu)

Buttons for 'OK' and 'Cancel' are at the bottom right.

Note that the first few characters of your text were automatically

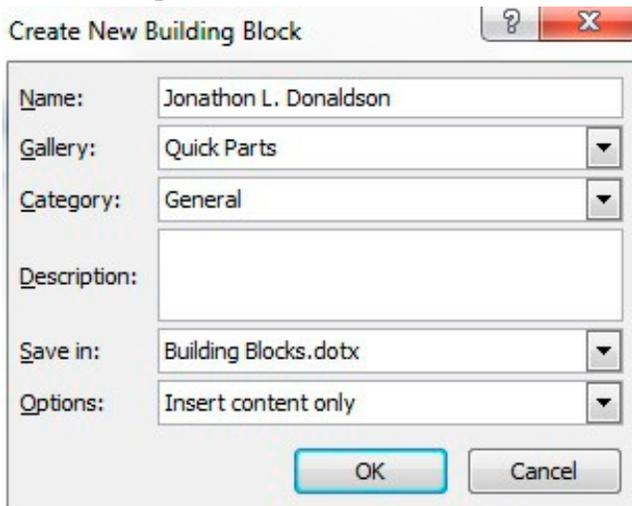
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(Continued from page 11)

inserted into the “Name” field. However, you can enter any text you want for a name.

If I had entered “John Doe” as the name, the complete name would have been displayed.

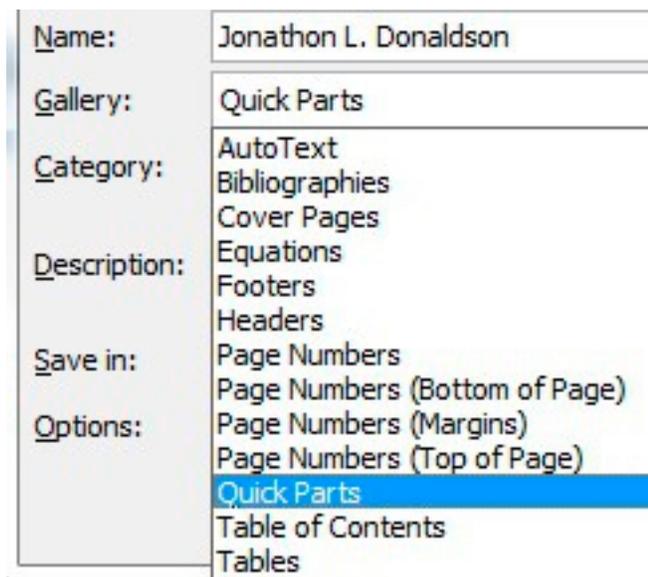
5. For example:



I did not test for a restriction on the number of characters, and it appears, from my limited use so far, that anything over 11 characters is initially truncated.

Now it is a matter of choosing from the options in each of the fields. I have not explored the advantages/disadvantages of the various choices. Here are my choices:

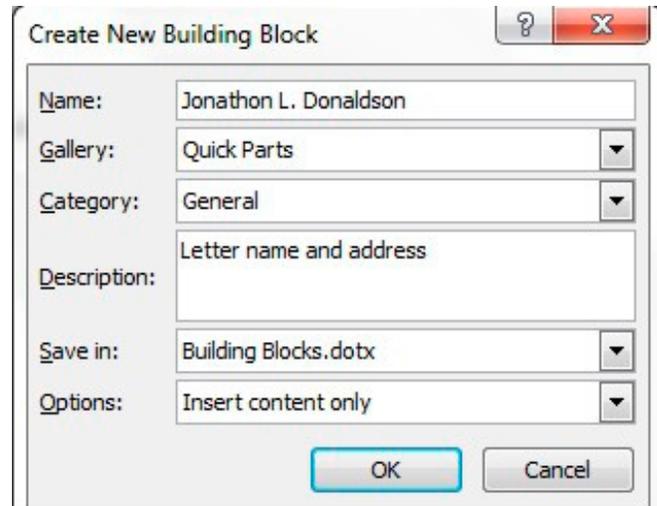
6. The “Gallery” choices are:



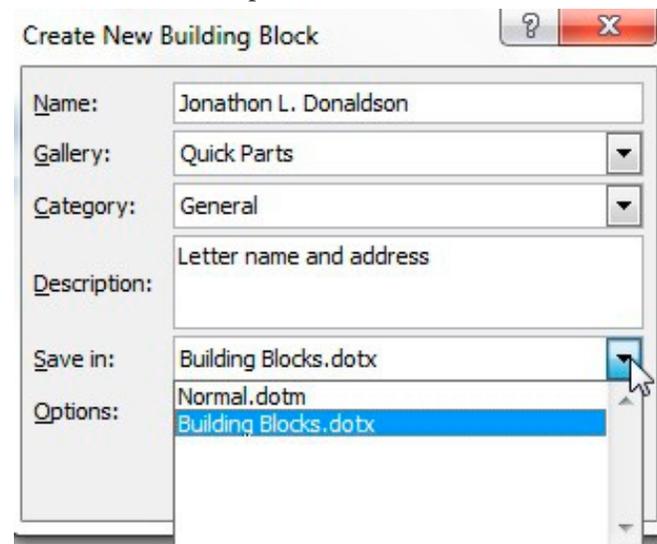
I stayed with the default choice, “Quick Parts.”

7. Because I have not used this feature before, the only two “Category” choices are “General” and “Create New Category.” I stayed with the default choice, “General.”

8. I typed in a short “Description”:

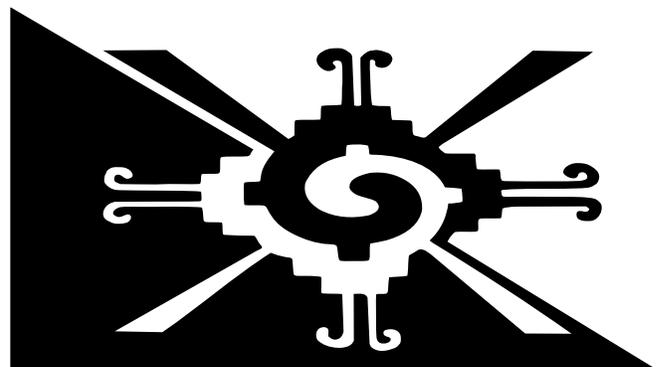


9. The “Save in” options are:



I stayed with the default choice, “Building Blocks.dotx.”

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Fairfax Meeting: September 21 Technology on the Move: An Overview of Mobile Operating Systems

Presented by Tom Gutnick

Mobile technology is hot! Today's mobile devices offer great communications and applications capabilities. But the prospective buyer of a smartphone or tablet faces a dazzling array of choices. Android or iPhone/iPad? Or maybe Windows Phone or Blackberry? New offerings from Ubuntu and Firefox just add to the confusion. But you're not just buying a device; you're buying into an entire ecosystem. This presentation will look at the choices, with emphasis on the "Big Two", so you can see through the haze and make a more-informed decision.

Tom Gutnick has worked in the computer industry for most of his adult life. He started out as a programmer, has managed software development projects and data centers, and has worked as a system performance analyst and information security analyst. Now, through Sunny Banana IT Consulting, he helps small businesses and home offices that don't have their own IT departments. He also teaches personal technology at Arlington Adult Education and information technology at Northern Virginia Community College.



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