

# The NCTCUG Journal

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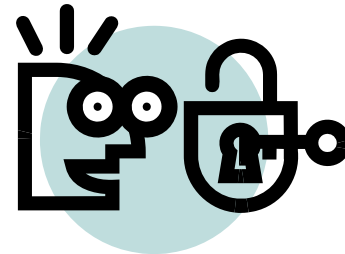
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## Password Protect Your Account

By Kathy Frey, Webmaster, Computer Club of Green Valley, AZ

<http://gvcc.apcug.org> frey58 (at) cox.net



If you password protect your account for your Windows operating system, then you should create a password reset disk. It takes very little time and is easy to do. In Windows XP, Windows Vista and Windows 7, these first steps are the same.

- 1) Click Start
- 2) Click Control Panel
- 3) Click User Accounts

After you have the User Accounts window open, select the account for which you want to make the password reset disk. (Make a reset disk for each account.)

- In Windows XP, on the left under Related Tasks, click on Prevent a forgotten password to start the Forgotten Password Wizard, and then click Next. Follow the wizard. You can use either a floppy disk or a USB drive for the reset disk.

- In Windows Vista, on the left click on Create a Password reset disk, then follow the wizard. The Password Reset Disk is essentially a small file that can be used to reset your password, even if you have changed your password since creating the reset disk.
- In Windows 7, click on Create a password reset disk. If no media is installed, you will get a message that indicates you need a removable media, such as a floppy disk or a flash drive.

Otherwise the password reset wizard comes up, and you again will need to follow the screens.

After creating your reset disks, store them in a very safe place, since the information can be easily used by anyone to reset the password and gain access to your account.

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There are other ways to change the passwords in all three operating systems, but the above is an easy and quick way to have that extra safety net in hand.

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## Windows 7 is Here! – Part IV

By Robert Nisbet, a member of the Asbury Computer Club, MD  
[www.amvresidents.org/computerclub](http://www.amvresidents.org/computerclub) halmarilyn (at) hotmail.com

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Well, October 22<sup>nd</sup> has come and gone. Windows 7 now is official! New computer owners and early up-graders now can start enjoying (in my humble opinion) the benefits of one of Microsoft's best efforts. Perfect? No, but it's a real 21<sup>st</sup> Century operating system, nonetheless.

In the final installment of the series, I cover what's included, what's not, what's improved, and more of what's new. In brief, Windows 7 has been trimmed down and a lot of things previously included are optional now. This helps make the operating system more compact and responsive while giving users more choice of the applications and utilities they want to run on their computers.

### What's Included?

Windows 7 still includes the Internet Explorer 8 web browser, since web access is a key part of any modern operating system. However, if you want to use Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Opera instead, feel free. Any browser easily can be set as your default through the Default Programs control on the Start menu. Also included are Windows Media Player 11, a basic picture viewer, and a DVD maker. Again, these easily can be replaced with utilities of your choice. Home users get the Windows Media Center included with their Windows 7 Home Premium, as was the case with the comparable Windows Vista version. That's about it for the standards we might have been used to seeing in previous versions.

### What's Not Included?

This is a much longer list for Windows 7. Microsoft has been hit with several anti-monopoly lawsuits over the last few years, so this and keeping the operating system tighter is one reason some things are missing. The most obvious application missing is an email client. Windows XP had Outlook Express and Windows Vista had

Windows Mail. Windows 7 users are left to choose their own email solution. More people are using web-based email manager applications, so that remains an option. Microsoft offers a free download of the Windows Live Mail computer-based client. It can gather your mail from a number of different email services other than just Live Mail, which is a positive, but I am not sure those used to Outlook Express or Windows Mail will care for the user interface. If you don't want to use web-based email and want a familiar-looking email client, try Mozilla's free Thunderbird client (go to [www.mozilla.co](http://www.mozilla.co) and look for the Thunderbird link.)

You won't find the Vista Sidebar for Gadgets, either, although the Gadgets still are available for installation on the desktop as indicated in Part III. Also gone from Windows 7 are the multimedia tools Windows Photo Gallery and Windows Movie Maker. (Strangely, the DVD Maker is included, but not a movie maker.) Those of us who did not use Windows Messenger instant messaging utility will welcome its absence in Windows 7. No more unused icon or pop-ups in the Notification Area. All these optional applications are available through the free Windows Live downloadable package, along with something called Live Family Safety to provide parental controls for those requiring them.

### What's Improved?

Some old Windows standbys have been given new faces and new lives in Windows 7. WordPad and Paint have been around since the infancy of Windows. In Windows 7 both have been given more functionality and the Scenic Ribbon interface introduced in Office 2007. In particular, the WordPad basic word processor has been "working out at the gym." Now it can read and create the docx format documents of Word 2007 in addition to its default Rich Text Format documents. Even if you don't buy Word, you can read, edit and compose docx

files. Another recipient of a major facelift is Calculator. (Did you even know there was one?) Now it has several useful modes and can do unit conversions. (Check the Hel section for an explanation of features.) All these improved utilities are tucked away in the Accessories group on the Start menu. They are worth checking out.

Users of Vista may not have realized their computers could take dictation, but speech recognition was included and seems much improved in Windows 7. All you need is a microphone. The speech tool must be turned on — it's hidden in the Start/Accessories/Ease of Access folder but after that you can launch programs, go to web sites, and dictate letters or email with just your voice. There are some good tutorials and practice sessions included. Unlike commercial products, such as Dragon Naturally Speaking, Windows Speech Recognition does not lock onto one user, so multiple users of the same computer can use it.

An in-your-face curse for Windows Vista users was User Access Control (UAC). Intended to help protect us from bad guys trying to install malware or modify the operating system, instead it became a “click every pop-up just to get it out of the way” bother. Often you had to give permission even to delete a desktop icon. The control levels for UAC were all-on or all-off. In Windows 7 UAC has been much tamed and provided with more user control levels. Now it better does the job it was designed for and stays out of the way the rest of the time.

Other improvements are not so obvious until you start using Windows 7. It is noticeably zippier than Windows Vista particularly on somewhat older computers. Windows XP aficionados take heart; you are not giving up performance to take advantage of the new fea-

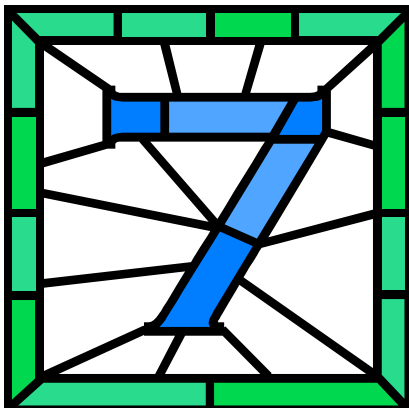
tures. Another area much improved is the time it takes to move or copy large files between the hard drive and external media. Vista's performance was take a coffee break time, now you hardly can blink and it is over. There are many more under-the-hood improvements such as file indexing in support of the Search feature, but I need to cover some other things.

## What's New?

This is an operating system that wants to stay out of your way unless you need it for something. Sure, it works differently in many aspects from Windows XP (and to a lesser extent Vista), but its intent is to make things easier for you. Sometimes change really is good. Some of the features tagged with the Aero handle may seem just gee-whiz at first, but after you use them for a while they really can be helpful. I have covered some of these things in Libraries in Part III, so I will cover some of the other new elements here.

While it isn't really new to Windows 7 (it was in Vista, but who knew?) the Windows Snipping Tool is very handy when you need to capture something on the screen or part of a web page. You can send your screen capture to the Clipboard for pasting or save it as an image for use elsewhere or sharing. Again, the Snipping Tool is in the Accessories folder.

One thing Microsoft feels is that everyone needs some basic online security protection in this age of hackers gone wild. Too many inexperienced users just let the “trial” security software that comes with many new computers expire and still felt they were protected. Not so. A new free download is Microsoft Security Essentials. This is a basic anti-malware (viruses and other bad stuff) tool that is simple to install and set up. Once running it is nearly invisible unless it detects something. It is updated automatically with Microsoft Updates and just does what it does in the background. Power users and tweakers still will want their full featured security suites, but for the majority of basic email and web users Security Essentials will keep them out of most bad situations. Security Essentials has gotten favorable performance reviews early on.



*(Continued on page 16)*

## OAG Joins the Facebook Generation(s)! Part 2

By Mike Morris, Editor, Front Range PC Users Group, CO [www.frpcug.org](http://www.frpcug.org)  
<http://www.frpcug.org> [twriterext \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:twriterext@gmail.com)

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Hello again. This is the Old Analog Guy with Part 2 of my story about joining the Facebook generation.

I need to warn you that I am a novice at this social networking phenomenon—just in case it isn't obvious.

In Part 1 I described the various privacy controls offered by Facebook. In this segment I want to (try and) describe (to the extent that I understand them) the two primary pages of a Facebook account:

- Home Page (also known as News Feed)
- Wall (also known as Profile)

[Below left] is a view of my Home Page.

[Below right] is a view of my Profile (Wall) page.

So ... what is the difference?

Both have the "What's on your mind?" field. Both have messages that I have posted and that "friends" have posted (although the list is not the same).

According to Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>): "A user's Wall is visible to anyone who is able to see that user's profile, depending on privacy settings." The Wall can include both text and attachments. Well . . . OK, but that is an unsatisfactory explanation (to me) of the difference between the Home Page and the Wall.

One difference between the two pages is the list of "friends" on the left side of the Wall. If I click on a photo (or name) of a "friend" in that list, I am connected to that "friend's" Wall (not to that "friend's" Home Page). In fact, as best as I can determine, I can't connect to a "friend's" Home Page, only that "friend's" Wall. So here is how I see the difference between these two pages (based on my testing, with results potentially different if privacy settings are different):

- My Home Page is a collection of messages posted by me and my "friends". It is (apparently) only visible to me.
- My Wall displays messages posted by me (and, under certain conditions, my "friends") and is visible to those I allow access. The Wall is also a link to other "friends."
- If I post a message from my home page (News Feed), it will be displayed on both my home page and my Wall. It will not be displayed on "friends" Walls. It will be displayed on "friends" home pages (Live Feed but not News Feed).
- If I post a message from my Wall, it will be displayed on my Wall and on my Home page (both News Feed and Live Feed). It will not be displayed on "friends" walls. It will be displayed on "friends" home pages, but only on Live Feed, not News Feed.



- If I post a message to a “friend’s” Wall from my computer (I click on the “friend’s” name or photo that is displayed on my Wall), it will be displayed only on that “friend’s” Wall (not on any other “friend’s” Walls). It will not be displayed on that “friend’s” home page (either News Feed or Live Feed). It will not be displayed on any other “friend’s” home pages. It will not be displayed on my Wall or on my home page.
- If a “friend” posts a message to my Wall from that “friend’s” computer, it will be displayed on my Wall and my home page (both News Feed and Live Feed). It will be displayed on that “friend’s” home page (Live Feed but not News Feed). It will not show up on that “friend’s” Wall, nor will it show up on any other “friend’s” Walls or home pages.

Do you follow all that? I think I have the *mechanics* of using these two pages correct. However, as I said in my Facebook post, the *logic* of using two pages—especially the logic regarding what is displayed (or not displayed) on each page—still is not clear to me.

According to the Wikipedia article:

“One of the most popular applications on Facebook is the Photos application, where users can upload albums and photos. Facebook allows users to upload an unlimited number of photos, compared with other image hosting services such as Photobucket and Flickr, which apply limits to the number of photos that a user is allowed to upload. ... Another feature of the Photos applications is the ability to “tag”, or label users in a photo. For instance, if a photo contains a user’s friend, then the user can tag the friend in the photo. This sends a notification to the friend that they have been tagged, and provides them a link to see the photo.”

If you look at my Home Page, you will see that one of my “friends” “was tagged in a photo.” It wasn’t MY “friend” that did the “tagging.” It was a “friend” of MY “friend,” but I received notification, as did, presumably, all of MY “friend’s” “friends.” That message only appears on my Home Page, not on my Wall. Actually, I am not sure why it is displayed on any page of my Facebook account, since I have disabled everything in the “News Feed and Wall” privacy options and in the “Applications” (Photos is an

“Application” which I have not installed) privacy options, and limited everything in the “Profile” privacy options to “Only Friends.” I suspect I don’t completely understand those privacy options.

I need to stop here. Just describing how this thing works starts short circuits in my brain—after all, I am an Old Analog Guy. I will try to describe, in Part 3, how you find “friends,” for those who need more friends, and for whom “old fashioned” telephone and email contacts are not sufficient.

I will end this story with references to some very interesting information on just how pervasive social networking has become—in all age groups of the population.



**Have a Safe  
and Happy  
4th of July!**

## Windows 7 Tech Tips

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., Regular Columnist, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida [www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org) [bwsail at yahoo.com](mailto:bwsail@yahoo.com)

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Have you ever wanted or needed information about the hardware in your computer? Did you know that Windows 7 contains a command that can provide you with a list of your hardware components including memory information? It does and it is very easy to explore and to save to a file. There are other helpful little bits of information hidden in the recesses of Win7, so let's take some time to explore a few of them.

First let's check out the system information command. Go to Start and type "cmd" in the Search box (without the quotes), then press Enter. This will open a command window in which you can type "systeminfo", also without the quote marks. Press Enter again and you will get a detailed profile of your computer. This list will include the processor, BIOS version, operating system and updates, both installed and available memory and much more. In all, there are thirty-two categories of information provided by this command. You can scroll up and down through this information. Then, if you want to save this info to a disc file, type the command

```
"systeminfo /FO CSV > systeminfo.csv"
```

Again, without the quotes. This file will be saved in the directory shown at the beginning of the command line. So be sure you remember this location when you go to look for the file. A CSV file can be opened in a spreadsheet or a database program. Now you will have a ready reference for the components which make up your computer. It's not a bad idea to create this file and keep it for reference purposes.



Of course, if you are a frequent reader of Dr Herb's "Computer Buffet" you would have seen references to "Belarc Advisor". This free program gives you a profile of all the hardware and software on your machine. It also highlights problem areas such as non-working applications. The software information can be quite extensive. The last time I ran this application on a Windows machine I had more than eight pages of information. Far more than I really wanted. The systeminfo command gives you a summary which is printable in one page.

There is another use for system information. If you type this "system information" command into the Start-Search box, it will bring up a list of applications before you finish typing. Select "System Information" from the list and click on it. You now have a double pane window with a tree of topics on the left and an information window on the right. The first item is a general summary of system information similar to the information we obtained in the command window. But there are other more detailed topics under the headings in the tree list. For example, hardware resources, components and software environment. Under components you will find a very important topic – problem devices. Hopefully, at this point there will be nothing listed when you highlight this topic. But if there are, it can lead you to solutions for some of your hardware problems. Under software environment you will find a topic called Startups. This lists the applications that are loaded into memory when your computer starts. Always something worth knowing.

Another interesting item under Software Environment is Windows Error Reporting. This gives you a detailed list of applications that have "misfired" or produced system hang-ups. This can be useful when you have problems with either Windows or third-party applications. All of the errors I found on my system were related to missing drivers that I had to install after installing Win7. Once that was completed the errors disappeared. Yes, I said that with crossed fingers – no use asking for bad luck, right?

If you haven't backed up your computer recently, then you should try the backup built into Win7. In previous versions of Windows the backup application provided by Microsoft was very slow and some versions were very limited in the media to which they would write the backup file. It was also useless when you changed your Windows version as the file formats in the backup file were not compatible with the newer version. In the Win7 help files there is information on how to restore a backup made with Vista to Win7. So at least the latest versions should be compatible.

These latest versions of the backup applications are much faster than previous versions. To try the backup applications, open the Control Panel and select System Security, then backup and restore. Here you have several options. You can do a complete image of your hard drive, just backup your data, or make a system repair disc. If you did not get a Windows installation disc when you purchased your computer, then the first thing you should do is make a system repair disc. All you need for this is a blank CD and then just follow the on-screen instructions. The next step would be to make a complete image file, preferably on an external drive. It's really not a good idea to put it on the same drive you are imaging even if it is a separate partition. Why? Because when the drive fails you won't be able to access the image file to restore anything to a new hard drive. Even if you do have a Windows installation disc the repair disc plus the image file are a better solution for restoring Windows and your files after a drive failure. The image file you create will be more current than the original installation disc when it comes to Windows updates. It will also include the installation of all the applications you added after you purchased the system or upgraded to Win7.

Once you have the repair disc and the image backup you can start doing data backups, or you can create new image files periodically. There is no need to make image files unless you have added applications or made substantial changes to your system. Windows file backup can be set to run automatically to save your data files. It will also add new folders and files to the backup list when you create them. I would also recommend that this be saved to an external drive.

Do you have a need for a system to remember user names and passwords? Win7 has a credential manager which can be used for storing user names and passwords in an encrypted file. This application can be

found in the Control Panel under User Accounts. If you can't find it, try searching within the Control Panel.

I frequently have a need to write down short notes or references to information I found on the Internet or in other sources. This is where Sticky Notes comes in quite handy. You can run this application by typing "stikynot" in the Start - Search box and clicking on the program that shows in the popdown menu. Alternatively, you can go to All Programs - Accessories and click on Sticky Notes. These can be placed anywhere on your desktop. You can also pin the application to the taskbar so it will be readily available. Just right click on the menu item or one of the sticky notes and select "pin to taskbar".

If you want to see the minute by minute performance of your computer, try typing "resource monitor" in the Start - Search box. The complete term will show up before you have completed typing and you can then click on the item. This brings up a window in which you can view the memory utilization, cpu utilization and other resources as you use your computer. It's a great way to see which applications are using the most memory.

By playing around with the Control Panel and other aspects of Windows 7, you can find many helpful built-in functions. You can also query the Help files. On my system the Help response is much quicker than it was in Vista and XP. I also found that many subjects are better explained and more detailed. So if you are stuck on something, try the Help application that's on the Start menu. The more you play with Win7, the more you will find that may be useful.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years, developing software and assembling systems.



## Backing Up And Restoring Files

December 2010 issue, Boca Bits, the monthly magazine of The Boca Raton Computer Society, Inc.

By Ron Hirsch, Member and Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida  
[www.brccs.org](http://www.brccs.org) Ronhirsch1439 (at) comcast.net

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If I had to pick a single area where most computer users are extremely lacking, it's in the area of backing up and preserving the documents and other items that they generate during the course of their computer activities. Most people just dismiss the subject with "Oh I don't really have anything of importance, and even if I do, I can always redo it easily." These people may only use their computer for the Internet and e-mail. But, redoing your address book and bookmark listing can be a task in itself.

And, if you use a program such as Quicken or Money, you have lots of financial info that would be a real job to rebuild if all your files were lost. I reminded a friend about backing up his Quicken stuff, and he said that he really didn't have to, as Quicken always backs things up automatically, which it does. But it backs things up onto the same hard drive, into a different folder. So, about 6 months later when his hard drive failed, his backup was worthless, and he was a very unhappy person.

### What Does Backup Really Mean?

Backup is the generation of duplicate files, often onto a removable medium, for all the things that you have generated on your machine. Generally, these are files that you have produced, not the program files which came on the CD. These duplicate files must be stored on something which can be separated from your machine, and definitely separated from your internal system hard drive.

Since most people have only one hard drive, it does not make good sense to backup onto that same drive. And, if you have your main drive partitioned into say a C and D drive, you will still lose your backup if the drive fails. If however, you have a second hard drive on your computer, you are much safer storing your backups there.

There are online services which offer "online backup" at a small cost, or no cost. This can offer access from another computer, when you might need that data. But I personally don't want my private data et al on an online computer, where it is possibly subject to being hacked or having that operation go out of business.

*NOTE: This article is only discussing backup of your personal files and data - it is not addressing a complete backup of your system drive, including your operating system (probably Windows). That is a separate topic which will be covered in another article.*

The backup media should be stored in a place where they it will not become lost, stolen, or damaged. When I was in business (many years ago), we backed up all our files every day, with a rotating system of seven tapes. Copies were stored in a fireproof safe, and periodically, we placed a current copy in our safety deposit box at the bank. Just putting copies on the shelf doesn't protect against their loss in case of a fire. Obviously, most users don't have to go to such extremes. But, for important information, it's a good idea to periodically put a backup copy into a secure and fireproof place, such as a home safe, or your safety deposit box.

In order to be able to follow and use the material in this article, you must be conversant with using Windows Explorer, or a similar file manager. Earlier this year, I presented several articles on this activity, with several exercises on the subject. If you are not familiar with using a file manager to copy files and add new folders and subfolders, I would suggest that you bone up on this subject first, and then get back to this article.



## What Do I Have To Do First?

First of all, the typical user who has programs in which files are saved, generally has no idea where they are. So, the first thing to learn is just that. When you are in a program such as Quicken, your files are generally saved in the same folder as the Quicken program. Other programs may use the My Documents folder, My Files folder, the Documents and Settings folder, or a special folder that the program has set up to store things.

I personally set my own folders for storing things. And, fortunately, most programs allow the user to specify where things are stored. In WordPerfect, I have a master folder set up, name WPWIN. Under that I have about 56 subfolders for all the categories that I have defined. There is a folder named “BocaBits”, which holds all the articles I’ve written for this publication. One of the main advantages of having your personal files organized in a master folder is that they are easier to copy to a backup medium. Just copy the main folder, specify to include the subfolders (if that is needed), and everything underneath will be copied. This is far easier than having to locate many different folders, and copy from each one individually.

Remember, using subfolders is a must. Some years back, one of my friends stored all his files for all his programs in the same folder, with no subfolders. Finding a file to use was almost like looking for a needle in a haystack. And, name your files using descriptive long filenames which all operating systems since Windows 95 can use. Which is easier to find “Letter to Jack re the new building.doc” or “let2jreb.doc”?

Here are some steps that I would suggest users consider — change the names to suite your desires.

1. Add a new folder on your C: drive, and call it “All My Stuff” (without the quotes.)
2. Add as many subfolders under it as you need. For example, (assuming you have these programs) add one for Word, Quicken, Money, Excel, etc.. Then, add as many subfolders under each of the main subfolders you’ve added. For example, the “Word” folder can have subfolders named “Letters”, “Faxes”, “IRS correspondence”, etc.. (Don’t use the quote marks — they are used here for clarity.)
3. Then in each of those programs go into “preferences” or “settings”, or wherever is appropriate, and set your new path and folder name there as the place to keep stuff. In something like Quicken, it wants its files where it specifies, but when you call for a backup in Quicken, you can specify the path/folder. So this folder you set up will always have duplicates of Quicken’s files, ready to be copied out to the removable media you choose.
4. For programs such as Outlook Express or AOL, it’s a good idea to save your address book, and your bookmarks. Finding the names of these files, and where they are located will be a good exercise for you in using Windows Explorer, and learning more about your browser.

NOTE: It is not absolutely necessary to do all of these previous steps if you’re willing to do your backup work with all your files where they are now. These steps are just offered to make your job of backing up easier. If this is the case, you can skip to the section entitled “WHAT MEDIUM SHOULD I USE TO BACK THINGS UP.”

## How Do I Get My Existing Files Into These New Folders?

If you don’t know or can’t find where the program stores the files you create, go into the program, generate a new document, and do a save on it. When the “save” window comes up, it may well show you the path/folder that the program uses. So you can now go to that folder, and find all the stuff you have done previously. While you’re in the “save” window, you can now specify your new repository for your files in this program, assuming it will cooperate.

If this does not happen, do a search in Windows (START>SEARCH) to find that file, and the location path will be available there.

Rather than move the existing files, I’d copy them into the new folder you set up. That way, if there are any “goofs” (perish forbid), nothing has really been lost. In the case of a program like Quicken, just open Quicken, and press CTRL+B. This should open the backup window, and you can type in the path/folder you’ve just made.

*(Continued on page 10)*

*(Continued from page 9)*

Later on, when you know that everything has been safely copied into your new folder tree, you can safely delete the files in their original locations if you want to do so.

When you've done this for all your important stuff, you will now have a new "filing cabinet" with "drawers" for all your important files.

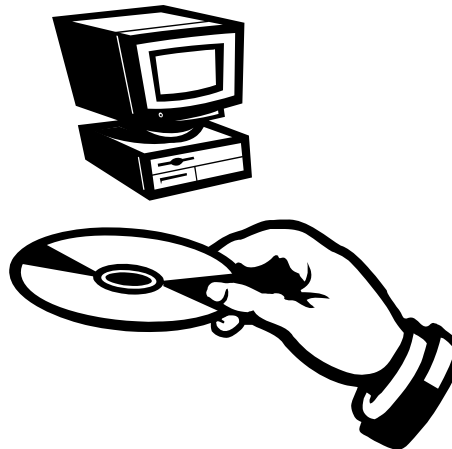
### What Medium Should I Use To Back Things Up?

In the "olden days", the choices were fairly limited. Floppy disks and tapes were about it. These days, those two media are not the ones of choice. Floppies have limited storage space, and most people don't have a tape drive, nor should they bother to get one these days.

The two choices that I would recommend are external USB drives, which many people have or flash drives which many people also may have. If you're not familiar with these devices, you should become familiar - they are very inexpensive now and are the perfect media for backing up purposes, transporting, and archiving files.. Or you can use a ZIP disk, if you have a ZIP drive, or use a CD rewritable disk.

To "burn" a CD, you must be familiar with this process. If you have a recordable or rewriteable drive on your machine, there should be a software utility to handle copying files. Usually this utility is on the CD that came with your hardware. But, it's possible that the utility wasn't loaded on at the factory. Check through the manual or help files to learn more about this.

Remember, once you get into the habit of backing things up, you can feel more comfortable about not losing lots of time and effort trying to reconstruct things. And, when you get a new computer, your new machine can take the backup medium you used, and copy it all (as desired) onto the hard drive of the new machine.



### One Further Recommendation To Save Your "Stuff"

One area that most users don't bother to consider, is the use of an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). These units plug into your wall outlet, and then the computer and monitor plug into it. Many don't feel that this is of any value to them, but I'll bet that they've had a crash during a power blink. The primary use of such a device is to keep your computer and monitor running when there is a power failure, either an extended one, or momentary power blink. The purpose of a UPS is not to allow you to keep working for an extended period when the power goes off, but to allow you to save your work, and shut down in an orderly fashion. Or, when the power "blinks", your system doesn't crash, and you lose the work that you have on screen. Even a one tenth of a second blink can wipe out what you're working on. And, if you haven't just saved it, you've lost it.

Furthermore, all computers should be connected via a high end surge protector to protect against line fluctuations and power surges. A UPS is also just about the best protection that you can use here. And, these days, UPS units are available for not much more than the cost of a good surge protector. Check Costco for some good values here. A capacity of 300-500 VA is a reasonable range for most home computers. Remember, as a minimum, you need to have your computer and monitor connected via the UPS. Without a monitor, your computer isn't good for much.

So, HAPPY backing up — try it. The day will definitely come when you'll be glad you did. And once you get to be an expert at it, you can impress your friends by teaching them.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site [www.brcs.or](http://www.brcs.or). This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a looseleaf notebook for future reference.

## Optimize Your PC

By Jon Jackman, President, Fox Valley PC Association, Illinois Fox Tales, August 2009  
[www.fvpca.org](http://www.fvpca.org) [jockojkj \(at\) aol.com](mailto:jockojkj@att.net)

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I saw an e-mail from PC World inviting me to speed up my slow PC. This directed me to a link for a "free scan" of my computer using PC Pitstop Optimize 3.0. Recently, we had a discussion at our general meeting of slow system performance, so I decided to give it a try and document the effort here. It may postpone an inevitable Windows re-install, but we will see.

The scan yielded some interesting results and offered to do it for me if I purchased the program (for about \$30.) I looked at the results and wondered how I might be able to do this manually for free? I looked around on Google and found some step-by-step guides on basically accomplishing the same things that PC Pitstop's Optimize would do if I paid the \$30. I ran the program and it began to scan my system. Interestingly it ran 3 scans of my Download speed. Not sure what that was about. It then displayed several pages of results: Junk Files, Internet Settings, Startup Programs, Registry Fixes and Performance Tweaks. When I reboot, it reminds me of what it can do to make things run better by displaying red messages. I will try some manual fixes and watch to see if the start-up scan gets progressively greener.

Looking at what Optimize tries to do I first decided to run CCleaner, a free program that has been a recent DOQ offering (2009 DOQ-2). Alternately, you can download it from [www.ccleaner.co](http://www.ccleaner.co).

### Junk Files

The first Optimize Results screen listed the junk files that I could safely delete. In my case, Optimize listed Temporary Files, Recycle Bin and Internet Caches. Using CCleaner in the Cleaner option under the Windows tab, files for Internet Explorer, Windows Explorer and System are listed by default, so I ran the "Analyze" tool. I was reminded to close Firefox to enable the Internet Cache to be cleaned as well. After several minutes it was complete and it said that ANALYSIS COMPLETE -- (526.859 seconds), 555.9MB to be removed. (Approximate size). As a comparison, Optimize indicated that 729 MB would be cleaned. I ran the "Run Cleaner" option.

### Internet Settings

The second Optimize Results screen looks at Internet Settings and explains that they may be tuned for faster throughput and may provide a substantial increase in Internet performance. In my case, my connections (HTTP, TCP/IP and Firefox) had no recommended adjustments. However, you may try using the Optimize free scan yourself and see that you have some that are recommended. In that case, you may try to Optimize your settings manually. Search Google for "TCP Optimizer", download and run it. Select "Optimal", then apply. Look around carefully and see what else you might optimize.

You will need to reboot.

### Startup Programs

When Windows starts up it automatically loads a number of programs, many of which you may not need. As you install more and more programs, this list can continue to grow. In my situation, there were several Startup Programs that Optimize considered "unnecessary." (You could run the free scan and see what it says about your system.) The ones listed on mine were: InstallShield Update Service (2 instances), Adobe Acrobat SpeedLauncher, QuickTime Icon and Realtek HD Audio. Using CCleaner I went to Tools and then selected Startup. I looked at the programs that Optimizer 3.0 suggested and right clicked on them and chose "Disable".

### Registry Fixes

Programs sometimes leave incorrect information behind in the registry, either because they uninstall improperly or because the files associated with the entries have been moved or deleted. Cleaning the Windows registry would hope to keep your PC in working order and keep the system running at peak performance. Using CCleaner, select Registry and then "Scan for issues". You can then choose to Fix them. Afterwards, not too many of the Optimize findings were changed.

*(Continued on page 15)*

## Moving From XP to Windows 7

By Vinny La Bash, Contributing Columnist, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

[www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org) vlabash (at) comcast.net

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Installing Windows 7 from XP is more complex than a straightforward upgrade from Vista. You need to perform a custom install, and you can do this with an Upgrade package of Windows 7. A normal upgrade won't work, but Microsoft describes the installation process as the option to "either completely replace your current operating system or install Windows on a specific drive or partition". Microsoft also allows a multi-boot system to be installed. In other words, you have the option of running both your current version of XP and Windows 7 if you want. Switching back and forth may not be the best choice as the interfaces are very different.

Completely replacing XP will not eliminate it from your system. The setup program creates a folder on your primary hard disk which it names Windows.old. The process then places all the major XP folders such as Windows, Documents and Settings, and Program file folders in the Windows.old folder. Nothing happens to your data files. You can still access them, but your applications will have to be reinstalled.

No matter which option you settle on, back up everything on your system first, especially your data files. Back up your data files at least twice and keep a copy in a separate physical location. Backing up more than one copy may seem like paranoia, but if anything goes wrong you'll be glad you did.

There are lots of ways to back up programs and data. If you use a third party program go to the manufacturer's web site and make sure the program will be modified to work with Windows 7. If you can't verify compatibility with Windows 7 or you don't use a third party backup utility, you will probably turn to XP's backup utility which Microsoft calls the Windows NT Backup-Restore Utility. Microsoft developed and released it specifically for restoring backups created in XP to restore in Windows Vista. It's pretty safe to believe that Microsoft will adapt it to work in Windows 7. If you can't verify that your third party backup utility will work in Windows 7 or you don't trust Microsoft that it

will modify its special XP utility, make copies of all your important data files to CD or DVD.

Read the article called *Step-by-Step: Windows 7 Upgrade and Migration* on the Microsoft TechNet site. It provides some great information about a utility called Windows 7 Easy Transfer. This program lets you transfer all your data and settings from XP to Windows 7. The Windows 7 installation disks contain a copy of the program and during installation a copy will be installed on your computer. You can then use the program to copy all your data files and settings to Windows 7.

Microsoft has recognized the popularity of low cost net-books, and Windows 7 was designed to operate on systems that many people consider underpowered. You won't need terabyte sized hard disks or 6 gigabytes of RAM to run Windows 7. If your XP system was manufactured in the last four years there is a high probability that Windows 7 will run just fine. To be safe, run Microsoft's Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor on your old system before rushing out and buying Windows 7.

The Advisor does a complete check of your internal hardware, installed programs, and any externally connected devices. If there are any compatibility issues the Advisor will report it, and even make suggestions on how best to eliminate incompatibilities, and select upgrade options. Go to the Microsoft Download Center to download and install a copy of this utility to your system. It will make you much better prepared for the upgrade to Windows 7.

You won't be the only one changing to Windows 7. Don't be shy about asking questions, and please share any good information you get with other members of the PC community. A good place to start is the Getting Ready for Windows 7 section of the Microsoft Answers web site. Don't forget your local PC User Group. There is no better source for good, accurate information. Even Microsoft will acknowledge that.

## Windows 7: Up And Running — A Quick, Hands-on Introduction

By Wei-Meng Lee

Reviewed by Elsie Smith, Editor, PC Community, CA PCC News, November 2009

[www.pcc.org](http://www.pcc.org) [lcms \(at\) pacbell.net](mailto:lcms@pacbell.net)

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Looking for the quickest path to get started with Microsoft's Windows 7 operating system? With *Windows 7: Up and Running* (O'Reilly), by Microsoft MVP Wei-Meng Lee, you get the essential information you need to upgrade or install the system and configure it to fit your activities, along with a tour of Windows 7's features and built-in applications.

And for those of you who have been around the block a few times with Windows, Lee says, "Even if you are already familiar with Windows, this book will still offer you some info that you may not already know."

Microsoft has learned from the mistakes of Windows Vista, and Windows 7 shows it—this new OS is much faster and more stable. Lee says, "When I tried Windows 7, it became clear to me that this was no Vista—Windows 7 is actually more stable and it runs beautifully even on older hardware."

With *Windows 7: Up and Running*, you'll learn what's new and what's changed from XP and Vista, and get advice on ways to use this system for work, entertainment, instant communication, and more. Windows 7 is poised to be a big hit, and with this handy guide, you can be up and running—and productive—with it right away.

This book will show you how to:

- Master the user interface, including the taskbar, jump lists, desktop gadgets, Aero Shake, and notification area
- Discover the joys of networking with HomeGroup file sharing and improved Wi-Fi

- Tour the system's improved security, including the Action Center, User Account Control, and Credential Manager
- Learn how to use Windows Live Essentials for messaging, photo sharing, moviemaking, emailing, and blogging
- Get to know built-in applications such as Internet Explorer 8, Windows Media Player 12, Microsoft Paint, and WordPad
- Learn about optional Microsoft software to enhance your Windows 7 experience

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- ✓ Ch. 2: Getting Around Windows 7
- ✓ Ch. 3: File Sharing
- ✓ Ch. 4: Security
- ✓ Ch. 5: Essential Applications
- ✓ Ch. 6: Internet Explorer 8
- ✓ Ch. 7: Using Windows XP Mode
- ✓ Ch. 8: Windows 7 Tips and Tricks

### Product Information

Windows 7: Up and Running  
A Quick, Hands-on Introduction

By Wei-Meng Lee

O'Reilly Media, Inc. <http://www.oreilly.com>  
800-998-9938

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Free Online Edition: To try out Safari and the online edition of *Windows 7: Up and Running* for 45 days, go to <http://www.oreill.com/go/safarienabled> and enter the coupon code shown on the last page of your book. To see the complete Safari Library visit: <http://safari.oreilly.com>



## Using Skype

By Mike Kearns, Member of the Computer Club of Green Valley, AZ

<http://gvcc.apcug.org> [bmkearns1 \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:bmkearns1@yahoo.com)

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Using free Skype software on your computer allows you to make calls over the internet to others who have the service. It's easy to download and works with most, if not all, computers. Try this great way to keep in contact with your kids, grandchildren, siblings and close friends.

You need three things to make it happen:

1. A high-speed internet connection.
2. A web cam, and I recommend Logitech. You can buy a good camera (with install disk) at Wal-Mart for around \$50. Newer computers have web cams built in. Each camera requires some adjustments for brightness, contrast and sound, but they are usually easy to work with.
3. You need to download the free program by going to Google and typing "free Skype download." The PC version is 4.2, and the latest Mac version is 2.8.

When you download the program you will be asked what Skype name you wish to use. You can choose any name you want. If you pick an unusual name, it is a good idea to let your Skype friends know, because Skype offers a directory to locate their users all over the world.

When you attempt the first contact with another Skype user, the person receiving the call has the option of accepting or rejecting the call. If you attempt to contact someone who doesn't know you, they can reject your call, similar to a spam blocker.

The web cam gives a nice picture of the person to whom you are talking on the screen. Quick movements can distort the picture for a few seconds while the web cam is adjusting.

Skype includes a small window of each party at the bottom of the screens so you know what the other person is viewing. The quality of the picture is better if both parties have a good high-speed connection. Going from a dial-up connection to a high-speed connection can cause distortion in the video and also slows down the interaction.

It is best to set up a time with the person you will be calling so they have their Skype program open and ready to accept the video call. The person you are calling also has the option to accept the call with or without video. Once you are connected, you can talk as long as you want—there is no charge. You can make adjustments to see the person on full screen or half screen. I find that the image gets a little distorted on full screen, but overall it is still a good picture.

### Washington Area Computer User Group

WACUG Meetings will be held on June 19 & July 17 from 12:30 to 3:30 pm. WACUG will hold joint meetings with OPCUG [[www.olligmu.org/~opcug/](http://www.olligmu.org/~opcug/)] It is anticipated that all meetings will be held at the **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute** [[www.oli.gmu.edu/](http://www.oli.gmu.edu/)] at George Mason University, 4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax, VA, known as the Tallwood Campus.

#### Topics

June 19th — Gadgets: iTouch, Blackberry, iPhone

You do not need to be a member to attend. For more information on WAC meetings and events, call the WAC AnswerLine (voice) at (703) 370-7649.

Also see WAC's Web Site at

<http://www.wacug.org/>

### Washington Area User Group Partners

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Another neat feature permits you to move a Netbook or laptop with the built-in camera around the room to show the person different items of interest in your home. The new, small Netbooks are especially useful because they are so portable and lightweight.

Skype can also be used as your telephone service by clicking on their Shop button. You set up a credit-card account with Skype to pay for the calls. Then you can make a phone call to a person's land line and talk to them through your computer.

I have noticed a few people using the new Netbooks as both a phone and video-calling service. They weigh only two pounds, and many women can carry them in their purse. With Skype you can make phone calls anywhere in the world, and the cost per minute will vary depending on where you are calling. I understand that overseas phone calls are very reasonable.

Keep in mind that Skype is not designed to be a replacement for your ordinary home phone since you would not have your computer on all the time. Also, be aware that you cannot use Skype for emergency calling such as 911.

(Continued from page 11)

### Performance Tweaks

Optimize made some recommendations to adjust some settings in the Registry. Using the suggested tweaks I searched the Registry and made the adjustments to the keys that I could find, although not all of the ones recommended could be found. As always, back up your registry first! (CCleaner would have done that prior to fixing the registry in the step above.) Start, Run "regedit", then Edit, Find and enter the string. Right click and adjust the value.

### Additional Fixes

- ▶ Use Auslogics Registry Defrag
- ▶ Defrag your hard drive!

Uninstall Optimize 3.0... You might want to reinstall it and run a new scan after you have done all of these steps to see if you made progress.

You should see a faster booting, faster running machine!

*Good luck!*

## NCTCUG Information

NCTCUG, Inc. 201 S. Kensington St. Arlington VA 22204-1141

Club Information call: 301-577-7899

Web Site: [www.nctcug.org](http://www.nctcug.org)

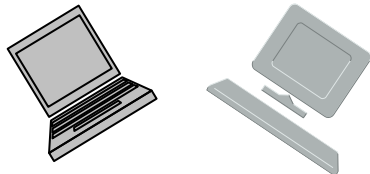
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Articles, helpful hints, and other items of interest to readers of the NCTCUG Journal are always welcome and will be published as soon as possible after submission. Priority is given to members' contributions. Articles may be submitted in MS Word (.doc)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

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### Newsletter Staff

Editor	Blair Jones	202-362-7344
	<a href="mailto:nctcugbj@verizon.net">nctcugbj@verizon.net</a>	
Exchange Newsletter Editor	Ron Schmidt	301-577-7899

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

*Thank You!*

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### Final Thoughts

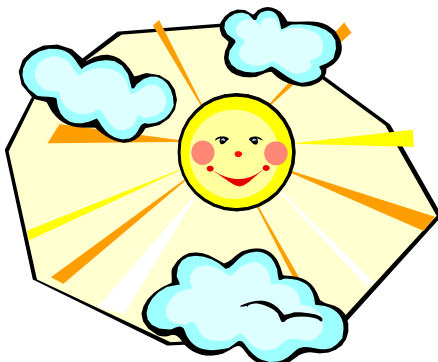
This has been by no means a comprehensive review of Windows 7. I have tried to highlight those areas I felt most beneficial to the average user. Windows 7 is an operating system both average users and power users can enjoy. You can just get on with things or you can tweak to your heart's content. The choice is yours.

Windows XP has been around nine years now and still is doing yeoman service for many. Microsoft will continue to support XP until 2014. Many people skipped Vista, and that is fine. With the prices of new PCs these days, however, it really is time to seriously consider moving into the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with a new system, or at least a new operating system for Vista users. If you like Windows XP, you will learn to like Windows 7. Essentially, Windows still is Windows and most basic functions work the same. The new features really do make the computer easier to use once you understand them. As stated in earlier installments, the best route to Windows 7 for XP users is a new computer. Vista users have it somewhat easier when moving to a like version of Windows 7. (Windows Vista Home Basic users are permitted to upgrade to Windows 7 Home Premium.)

I hope this series has been beneficial in explaining some of the major features of Windows 7 in non-technical language and perhaps helping some of you decide to take advantage of the improvements it offers.

NCTCUG, Inc.  
201 S. Kensington St.  
Arlington VA 22204-1141

# First Class



June/July 2010	
1st Wed. (6/2, 7/7) 7 p.m. General Meeting	
2nd Wed. (6/9, 7/14) Online-Only Webinar using Skype	<i>New!</i>
4th Wed (6/23, 7/28) 7 p.m. Internet SIG	
3rd Monday (7/19; none in June) 7 p.m. Board of Directors	
Meetings are at <b>Carlin Hall</b> , 5711 S. 4th St., Arlington VA: East off of Carlin Springs Rd, just south of Arlington Blvd/Route 50. See website for directions to post-meeting pizza gathering.	

