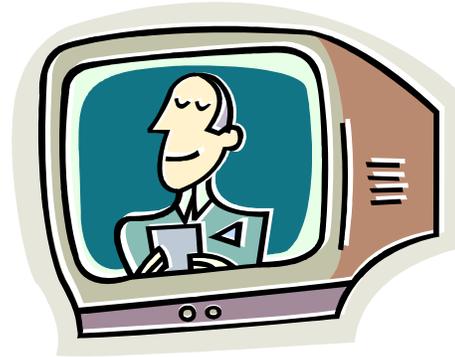# The NCTCUG Journal

Keeping Up

by Paul Howard (NCTCUG)

November 3rd Meeting Topic

Organizing Your Hard Drive & The Best Backup Plan to Protect Your System from Failure

NCTCUG's meeting at 7 PM on Wednesday, November 3rd will feature a webinar presentation by Gene Barlow. Gene and Linda Barlow represent Acronis Software to the user group community. Acronis just released a new version of their partitioning product, Disk Director 11 Home, now with support for the Windows7 OS. With the large terabyte hard drives we have today, the need to set up & organize your hard drive is essential in order to take advantage of the additional space. It can be done very easily with Acronis Disk Director 11 Home.

Acronis True Image Home 2011, new release just announced in August, is their backup and recovery product. This product provides the maximum flexibility to ensure that your computers' hard drive is adequately protected and can recover from any unforeseen events, such as hard drive failures, viruses or unstable software downloads. By having & implementing a well thought -out Backup and Recovery Plan, you can put your system together again fairly quickly, instead of days or

weeks. This is an important topic that every PC User should implement on their computer.

The combination of one or both of these excellent hard drive utilities will give you the power to Organize Your Hard Drive for data safety in the event of a drive crash and Protect Your Hard Drive in case of a system failure.

Gene has been a presenter in the user group community for over 28 years. For many years he managed IBM's user group support organization and has been called the Father of PC User Groups. Now retired, Gene started his own company called User Group Relations (www.ugr.co), providing support to the user group community for the software companies he represents. He is an informative and easy to understand presenter. Don't miss this important presentation.

Inside

What's in MS Windows 7

By Randy Esdon, a member of Big Blue & Cousin, Canada www.bbc.org

Hopefully you've heard of the new version of MS Windows called Windows 7. So what is the home user getting should they wish to upgrade their computer? In this article I'll try to highlight some of the basic home user features. This is not a complete highlight of everything that has been added or improved upon, but explains those items the average user might notice.

First off, the core applications that got an update are Windows Media Player, Internet Explorer, Paint, Calculator, and Wordpad. The first two programs I listed usually do get updates and are already available for Vista and XP.

The other three are basic programs that haven't seen any updates in a while. Basically their User interface (UI) and some functionality have been improved. The UI of each program now has the ribbon style of interface, like that of Office 2007. MS Paint added some more brushes, and can now use 'shapes' within the drawings. The best improvements are in the calculator, where they have added selectable tools or modes such as a mortgage calculator, a gas mileage calculator, a statistics mode, and even a programmer mode.

The next item Microsoft worked on was the desktop management area. They added several user friendly features, such as 'Snap to Docking', 'Aero Shake', an updated 'Taskbar', 'Jump Lists', 'Aero Peek', and 'Gadgets' wherever you want them.

'Snap to Docking' has three functions:

- to maximize a window, drag it to the *top* of the screen,
- to restore the window, drag it *from* the top of the screen,
- to compare two windows side by side, drag them to the *opposite sides* of the screen.

'Aero shake' is simple, and provides a great way to focus on just one application. Grab the 'Title Bar' of the screen you have open, shake the mouse, and all the other applications that are open will disappear.

'Taskbar' has been updated to include the ability to switch the order of the screens that are open. For those who multi-task, this is good when you want to prioritize your work. You can also point to a Taskbar icon to see a thumbnail preview of open files or programs. Then move your mouse over a thumbnail to preview the window as a full screen.

'Jump Lists' are smart lists of links specific to each application, such as:

- a history of pages visited — Internet Explorer or Firefox.
- opened files — MS Word.
- Frequently played songs — Media Player. Whenever you open a program, an up arrow becomes available next to the program icon. Click the list, and save time navigating to where you want to start within that program.

'Aero Peek' gives you the power of X-ray vision so you can peer past all your open windows, straight to the Windows 7 desktop. Simply point to the right edge of the taskbar and watch opened windows instantly turn transparent, revealing all your hidden icons and gadgets.

'Gadgets' can now be placed anywhere on your desktop, as opposed to just in the docking bar, as is the case in Vista.

'Home Networking Features' has been updated to make it easier to securely share files between computers. When you save a network as a home network, Windows pops up a dialog box which lets you decide what you want to share at home. To connect a second Windows 7 computer to the same network, enter the key given to you by the first machine, and you have instant secure file sharing. Microsoft has also included the ability of the computer to use different printers depending on what location you're at. This will simplify things for those people who take their laptop from home to the office, and use a

printer at both locations.

'**Program Compatibility Troubleshooter'** has been added to help with using older programs within Windows 7. Basically this feature will ask you a series of questions to help you get a piece of incompatible software working. This has been much more streamlined than in Vista. Simply select the software that is giving you issues, list the problems associated with the software, select the operating system it does work with, and run the test. If the software works, save the settings and you should be set up to use that program in the future.

'**Biometrics'** features of Windows 7 have been enhanced. This allows users to use fingerprint biometric devices to log on to computers, grant elevation privileges through User Account Control (UAC), and perform basic management of the fingerprint devices.

'**Tablet PC'** has many improvements for handwriting recognition. Support for handwriting recognition, personalization, and text prediction in new languages has been enhanced. Support for handwritten math expressions, and personalized custom dictionaries for handwriting recognition have been added.

'**User Access Control'** (UAC) functionality improvements are some of the biggest from a user's perspective. Basically Microsoft has changed the UAC to have a slider bar the administrator can access, from four levels of security. By doing this, the number of tasks the average user can perform, that do not prompt for administrator approval, have been increased. This has dramatically reduced those unwanted pop up messages that ask you if you really want to do this.

Other items that have been improved include:

- Common tasks are easier and faster. For example with the built-in Windows Search, finding documents is much quicker.
- Less power consumption through better sleep/ hibernate support. This provides longer battery time for laptops.
- Improved built-in CD Burning and DVD creation. This includes the ability to burn ISO images.
- For those who are gamers, there is better 3D hardware accelerated graphics support through an updated DirectX.

A Windows backup program has been added that will do a complete image of a drive. This will allow for easy recovery should a computer have a complete hard drive failure.

The 'Problem Screen Recorder' is a new feature in Windows 7. This allows you to capture and record the steps you are taking to produce a problem. Then you can email this file to a tech to explain the problem. It can also be used to generate a file with step by step pictures that can be edited so you can make a tutorial on how to use a program.

Overall, the new Windows system runs significantly quicker than Vista. It is also better equipped, with improved features and security functions.

Windows 7 is less demanding in terms of hardware than its predecessor, and has better support for hardware drivers than Vista was when it was released.

Overall I see many benefits to upgrading to the new version of Windows.

Yes, there is nothing outstanding that requires a user of Vista or XP to jump on the band wagon and do the upgrade, but for those who are fed up with the problems Vista presents, and those who are worried that XP has been dropped from Microsoft's supported OS list, i.e. no more updates, Windows 7 seems to be a good choice.

Discovering Windows 7 – Part 1

By Neil Stahfest – Tacoma Area PC User Group By Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, Washington www.tapcug.org ncstahfest (at) msn.com

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Last summer's pre-release date order offer for Windows 7 was too good a deal for me to pass up. I can't remember the last time Microsoft sold copies of its computer operating system for less than $50. Maybe it was DOS 5.0?

The upgrade from Vista to Windows 7 on my laptop PC was easy. I won't go into the details at this time. I would just suggest that if you're going to use the upgrade path from Vista to Windows 7; run the Windows 7 Advisor to identify any potential hardware or software problems, defrag drive C, run your anti-virus program and then disable or remove it before you start the upgrade. Oh, and it wouldn't be a bad idea to make a copy of your important files (pictures, documents, etc.) on an external device before you start. Just to be safe. <S>

Now, leaping ahead to actually using Windows 7, if you are familiar with Windows Vista your initial impression will be that it looks similar. If you are used to Windows XP the differences will be more apparent. The taskbar has a round Windows Start Button and all the icons immediately to the right of it represent programs that you can start with one mouse click. The icons probably look bigger than you are used to seeing, it makes them easier to see. There is a control setting that allows you to make them smaller. The icons on the right had side of the task bar, the "Notification" area, represent various controls and activities that automatically start whenever you turn on the computer.

When you click on the Windows Start Button, you'll notice that there is a Shut Down button in the lower

right corner of the Start Menu (circled in red in the picture below). The shut down sequence has been reduced to two key presses (Start button plus Shut Down button). Press on the little triangle to the right of the Shut Down button for more options (like Restart).

Also notice that there is a "search box" to the left of the Shut Down Button (circled in blue). Try typing key words or phrases here to look for files or information. Windows 7 will start suggesting solutions to your search almost as fast as you can type. You can even use this to find controls that you would normally go to the Control Panel for (like finding and changing file associations or display settings). Don't see what you are looking for? We'll examine file searches in greater depth in the near future.

Is there an icon on your desktop that starts a program that you use frequently? Right click on the icon and select "Pin to Taskbar" from the menu that appears. Now you can remove the icon from your desktop (hopefully cleaning up its appearance) and start the program with just one click on the Taskbar icon. You can fit a surprising number of icons on the Taskbar. When there are too many icons to fit on the Taskbar, a second row will be created (accessible through a scroll bar).

Before we leave the subject of the Taskbar, Windows 7 has a new feature that allows you to preview open files. I have two open Microsoft Word documents. Notice in the example shown below, that the icon for Word documents appears to have second icon behind it (circled in red). By hovering my mouse pointer over the icon I can see a preview of both documents. If I point at one of the preview images and click, it will be maximized.

Want to look at both documents side by side? Put your mouse pointer at the top of the document window and drag it to one side of your desktop. When the mouse pointer touches the side of the desktop, the document window will snap to fill half of the

Microsoft Scanner & Camera Wizard

By Bob Elgines, CRCC Editor,
Colorado River Computer Club, AZ www.crccaz.org elginesz@rraz.net
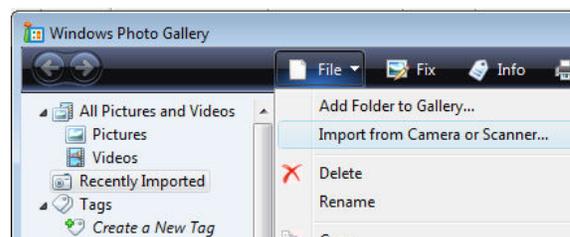
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all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Most of us have multiple digital cameras nowadays, and really don't need to install all of their programs anymore since Windows XP. You can use the "Scanner & Camera Wizard". It is located under "Programs/Accessories" and if the computer does not have any third party camera programs installed, it will come up automatically after you plug your camera in to a USB port. It will list your camera, then guide to through a procedure to download your pictures or videos to your selected folder and if you wish to delete them from your camera or not.

In Windows Vista, it is not under the "Accessories" folder, but under "Programs" labeled "Windows Photo Gallery". Run this program, then go to "File" choose "Import from Scanner or Camera".

If the computer does not have any third party camera programs installed, a selection "Import pictures; Using Windows" will come up automatically after you plug your camera in to a USB port (see picture on the left).

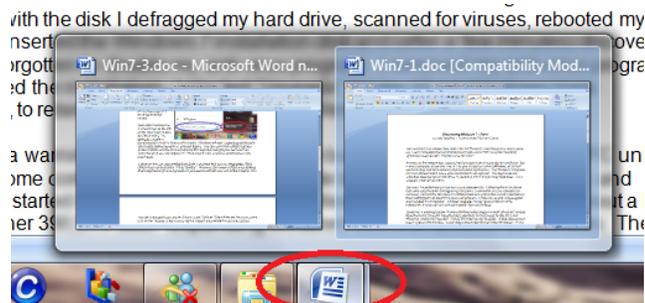Now you can download your pictures on any computer using the built-in software.

screen. Now open your second document. Point at the top of the document window and drag it to the other side of the screen. When the pointer touches the side of the screen, the document will snap to fill the other half of the screen. You can do this with pictures, spreadsheets, virtually any kind of file or folder. If you do this with file folders, you can drag files from one folder to another.

At this point I think you're starting to see how some things have changed in Windows 7. These don't appear to be changes for the purpose of making changes but changes that actually enhance Windows.   My impression is that the new Windows is

faster, more useful, prettier and smaller. Yes, smaller! Windows 7 actually takes less space on my hard drive than Windows Vista.

Next month, we'll look at more Taskbar and Start menu improvements.

Music — Capture it, Organize it and Enjoy it – Part 1

By Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida July 2010 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor
www.spcug.org president (at) spcug.org

Music in the past was captured and made available on analog sources and played back on analog devices. Those analog sources were tubes (in Thomas Edison's times), record disks (78s, 45s and 33 1/3 vinyl), and finally tapes (reel-to-reel, 8 track, and cassette). And they were played on a phonograph (circa late 1870s), a turntable (spanning the 20th century) or a tape machine (spanning the late 20th century). All those devices were engineered to convert the analog music on the source media to sound that eventually hit our ears.

 Analog music was the capture of some sort of wiggle, like the wiggle of a turntable needle or stylus, or the wiggle of a magnetic field on a magnetic tape. The quality of the music we experienced improved all along the time that analog music was available, finally culminating in High Fidelity, Stereophonic Sound. Stereophonic because there are two tracks, one for the right and one for the left, to match the hearing mechanisms on our head, one on the right and one on the left. High Fidelity is the property of reproducing all of the music frequencies that were originally produced by the original source, like a singer's voice, or a rock and roll band, or a symphony orchestra.

The frequency response of the human ear is about 20 Hz to around 16,000 Hz (although sometimes it is stated as 20 to 20k). These are general ranges and as we age, the lower limit tends to rise and the upper limit tends to be lowered. (By the way, if someone is exposed to very high intensity sounds or noises {measured in decibels}, their hearing range could be affected. In fact, sounds greater than somewhere around 100 decibels {db} can produce permanent damage to one's hearing range.) So, High Fidelity Stereo was developed to deliver two channels, each with about a 20 to 16,000 Hz frequency range. What more could you ask for. (Well, actually now with digital reproduction you can have much more, like 5.1 surround sound, but that is a subject for another time.)

Enough of the past, now on to the digital music age. One of the differences between analog and digital sources of music is the fact that with an analog source, the music quality deteriorates with each play. Each time a record or tape is played, some of the range of the music is lost. But with digital sources (digital files), the quality always remains the same. Go ahead and play away. The reason for this is that the digital representation for music is just a series of ones and zeros (which is reproduced exactly with every Copy). As long as that series is reproduced (and the process that interprets the ones and zeros doesn't change), then the results, the music, will always be the same. So, once we get the music, we have it at that quality, for good. But how is digital music created? What is the source? And what devices are used to reproduce it?

The recording process starts with (analog) microphones which produce a small analog signal. This signal is amplified and then digitized. From this point on everything is digital, therefore perfectly reproducible. Digitization produces a file that has been engineered to contain the complete audible frequency range. This is the .WAV file that is on the CD that is purchased. The CD becomes the source for the music. (Today, most music is distributed on

CDs, although more and more music is being downloaded to computers for eventual listening.)

Typically there are about 15 songs on a CD, but with the capacity of a CD (700 MB) and the average size of a song (35MB), you might get as many as 20 or 21 songs on a CD. So, if CDs are the source of the music, a CD player is the device that is used to reproduce the music. CD players come in two basic varieties, stereo cabinet type to be used with a stereo system maybe in the family room, and portables for use on the go. Some larger stereo cabinet models can hold as many as 400 CDs and provide a place to store all the CDs (without their cases). Now that's how the digital music is produced, distributed, and played, but what about MP3s?

Well, an MP3 file is the result of processing a WAV file with an MP3 conversion program, the product of which is much smaller than the original. (WMA is another file type similar to MP3 that has been introduced and used by Microsoft.) MP3 files are typically one tenth the size of the corresponding WAV file. The resultant file size can vary because there are settings used by the MP3 conversion program. The MP3 conversion process is a "Lossy" conversion, that is, some of the quality can be lost in the conversion. The quality is selected by choosing a bit rate for the conversion. For music this rate typically goes from 128 kbps (considered near CD quality) up to around 320 kbps (for those audiophiles that have very good hearing and reproduction systems). There are also lower qualities for low frequency range (voice only), files which are 32 kbps and 64 kbps. The lower the quality, the smaller the size of the MP3 file, and similarly, the higher the quality, the larger the file size.

Some people might be able to detect the difference between a 128 kbps quality and a 320 kbps quality, but if you cannot then the smaller file would be a better choice. (If you're not sure if you can detect the difference, create an MP3 of one of your favorite CDs at two different bit rates and then play each one and see if you can tell the difference. If you can tell the difference, use the higher bit rate as your quality setting.)

So, with that bit of background, we are able to discuss the process of converting songs on a CD to MP3 files. This process is called Ripping a CD. (Don't blame me, I didn't name it.) The process does nothing like its name implies, it simply converts the WAV file on the CD to an MP3 file on the computer, at the chosen qual-

ity. Ripping can be done with many programs like Windows Media Player, Musicmatch Jukebox, Audacity, and Winamp. (Windows Media Player (WMP) which comes with all Windows Operating Systems will be used here in examples.)

To Rip a CD, place the CD in the CD/DVD reader/writer tray, start WMP, and click Rip on the top Selection Bar. It's that easy. A list of the files on the CD will be shown with a checked check box for each. If you don't want one of the songs, uncheck the box. When the conversion is finished you will have an MP3 file for each of the checked songs.

Typically, the MP3 files will be in a Folder with the name of the CD Album, within a Folder for the Artist within the folder that was setup as the Rip Folder. From this folder, you can move or copy the songs to a library folder. Most people will probably use the Music (or My Music) folder that is part of Windows for this.

Next month we'll discuss organizing the Library to take advantage of the fruits of your (possibly) considerable labor in creating the music files. And don't forget: backup all that music regularly, so you don't have to go through that process again.

A Phone Conference Can Be Worth A Thousand E-Mails

By Judy Taylour, President SCV Computer Club, California Chair, Southwest Computer Conference www.scvpcg.org www.theswcc.or Scvjudy(at)usa.net

Can a conference call be fun? Absolutely. During the last couple of weeks I've been on two conference calls using magicJack's free conference calling service. All the person who is using magicJack has to do to set up the conference call by following the below steps.

1. Dial 305.848.8888
2. Press 2
3. Enter a 3 digit pin to create your Conference Room Number
4. Write your Conference Room Number down (*so you don't forget it*)

Next, distribute dial-in instructions to your conference call attendees:

1. Dial 305.848.8888
2. Press 1
3. Enter your Conference Room number
4. Say Hello to everyone

But, wait, the fine print states that free magicJack conference calling is not restricted to magicJack users – anyone who can dial in may use this service. You can use the same number over and over.

The first conference call was for three hours and two of the participants were using Skype to call in and another was using Google Voice. The rest of us were using free minutes on our cell phone or have a free Internet-based phone system such as offered by Time Warner.

One participant suggested that instead of taking time to repeat URLs, e-mail addresses, etc. over and over until everyone wrote them down, we should use a video connection and suggested TodaysMeet at http://www.todaysmeet.co. The person who set up the conference call also set up a video account for us to use. We went to a todaysmeet.com URL that had the name of the meeting after .com/.

This service enabled us to type in any information that was pertinent to the meeting (the 140 character limit was sometimes difficult to remember as we were typing away). Here are the steps to setting up your online conference room.

1. Name your room
2. Decide how long you want the data to be available for people to refer to (one week is default but you can choose from 2 hours to 1 year)
3. Click on Create Your Room

To join the online part of the meeting:

1. Go to the URL provided by the person setting up the account
2. Type your name in the What's Your Name? box
3. Click Join
4. Start communicating with the conference call attendees
5. Type your message in the Say: field
6. Click Say and this is what you see

Listen.

Hi, Judy is online
Judy at 11:11 PM, 31 Aug 2010 via web

Down at the bottom of the string of comments is transcript. Click and you can copy and paste the entire transcript of the meeting into your favorite word processing program, edit it to remove what isn't relevant and send it out to all of the attendees. Remember, the complete transcript will be kept for the time period you chose.

Click on projector and you get a full-page view of the conversation.

I clicked on transcript, moved some of the comments around so they flowed better – some of us forgot we could only type in 140 characters so our comments were between other comments, added the handouts that were talked about and sent everything to the attendees (over a dozen people).

Was this a successful meeting? Absolutely. We all freely shared information with the other attendees, hung up our phones (so to speak) and exited TodaysMeet with a lot of new ideas on how to run our computer clubs / user groups. Are we going to do it again? Yes.

One of the ways you could use these two free services is for your board meeting. Every other month, have a conference call and TodaysMeet meeting. No one has to clean their house, you don't have to find a place to hold the meeting, etc. etc. I bet you can think of other ways to use one or both of these services.

Another website that was mentioned is www.blogtalkradio.com where you can create your own online live call-in radio show with your phone and computer. I envision user groups having a couple of their techs having an online radio talk show featuring Q&A for their members. Up to five callers can participate at one time with an unlimited number of listeners. Shows can be streamed directly during the show, heard as an archived podcast via RSS feed, or downloaded to a computer.

Of course, information about the show will be in the group's newsletter which is shared with other groups plus there will be information on the group's website. Hopefully the show gets participants from other groups and the general public. Or, someone could talk about the group's monthly meeting, SIGS, special events, etc. Should we call this great publicity for your group?

The service is free because it is advertising supported.

What was this meeting all about? The 1ˢᵗ Region 1 Town Hall meeting moderated by Sam Wexler and Judy Taylour with attendees from New York, Florida, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas and California.

Nybbles and Bits

By John Pearce, Chair, WebBoard, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, CO February 2010 Bits of Bytes, Newsletter of the P*PCompAS http://ppcompas.apcug.org Glenihan (at) comcast.net

Last month, I mentioned an article in TechRepublic regarding removing old drivers from your system. Little did I know that issue was going surface in my notebook computer that I upgraded to Win 7. The touchpad on my notebook computer has a vertical scroll area at the right side of the pad. I had no problems using the vertical scroll until I upgraded to Win 7 at which point, it stopped working.

I ignored the problem until just after the January PPCompAS meeting. When I started to investigate and tried to access the settings for the touchpad, there was a pop-up dialogue box telling me that IntelliPoint was blocked from running because of known incompatibilities with Win 7. It took me a few minutes to remember that I had bought a USB mouse and installed Microsoft IntelliPoint software shortly after purchasing the notebook. I had used the USB mouse until I bought a Logitech wireless mouse a year or so ago.

My first thought was to just remove the offending software. Good idea except there was nothing shown for IntelliPoint in the Programs and Features list and nothing for the USB mouse in the Mice section of Device Manager. Connecting the USB mouse made it appear in Device Manager and caused IntelliPoint to appear in the Programs list. I thought I was close to being done. Surprise, surprise! Trying to perform an uninstall of the software produced the pop-up about IntelliPoint being blocked. I wondered how you could uninstall it if it was blocked from running. This time the pop-up dialogue box provided a link to an update and I performed the update. After the IntelliPoint update completed, the vertical scroll on the touchpad worked correctly. However, I decided to remove IntelliPoint because I no longer use the USB mouse and could not think of a good reason to leave the software installed.

This is the first time I can remember where it was necessary to upgrade software just to remove it. I expect the Win 7 upgrade did not upgrade the IntelliPoint software because the USB mouse was not connected at the time the upgrade was performed. Maybe next time I will remember that USB devices should be plugged in during an upgrade and to make the related software and drivers visible. Even better would be to remove old drivers as TechRepublic suggests.

WordPad...An Upgraded Little Gem in Windows 7

By Nancy DeMarte, Regular Contributor, Office Talk, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
April 2010 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor www.spcug.org ndemarte (at) verizon.net

These days, with software applications competing for market dominance, word-processing programs have become highly comprehensive and at times overly complex. This trend may be fine for business or frequent users, but for the average PC user who wants only to write letters or other simple documents, navigating all those commands can be frustrating. Besides, these fancy programs aren't cheap. The full version of Microsoft Word 2007 costs about $230 as a stand-alone product or $110 as an upgrade. If bundled as part of the leanest Windows Office 2007 suite, the Home and Student version, which includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and One Note, the cost can be as much as $150. The OpenOffice.org Writer application is free, but also contains many commands the casual user may never need or want to learn.

Fortunately, a dandy little program called WordPad has resided for years within every version of Windows operating system. If you have ever taken the SPCUG first computer class for beginners, Getting Started, you have worked with WordPad. The updated version which comes free with the Windows 7 operating system has added enough extras to give the casual user the tools to create a variety of sophisticated-looking documents without getting overwhelmed.

Like Office 2007, WordPad includes a new organization for its commands. A simplified "Ribbon" puts all the command buttons on display rather than in drop-down menus. The Home tab gives one-click access to the familiar commands such as font, font size, and effects such as bold and font color. The Ribbon includes some commands new to this Windows 7 version, such as highlighting, bullets, line breaks, and new colors. When you click the Paragraph dialog box button, you can add Tabs and Indents to your document.

WordPad 2007 Ribbon

The View tab displays Zoom buttons plus check-boxes to turn on or off the horizontal ruler at the top and status bar at the bottom, a useful feature if you'd like to see more of a page on the screen.
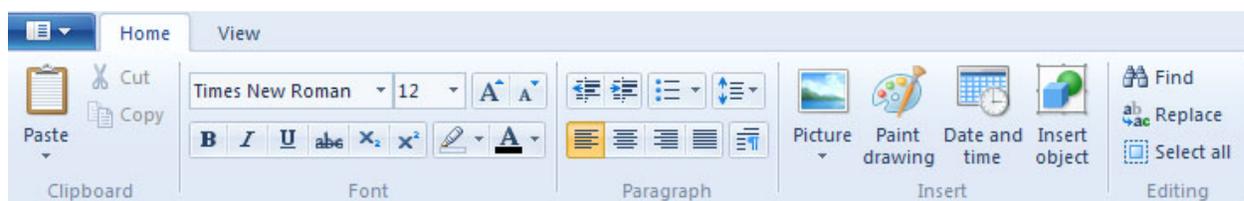
This new version of WordPad allows insertion of photos, drawings, date and time, and objects. When you click the Picture button, for instance, you are taken to your Pictures folder. Just open any photo and it appears in the WordPad document. Clicking Paint Drawing takes you to the Windows Paint program (another upgraded program in Win 7), where you can create a drawing and put it into a document. Using similar steps, you can create and add graphs, Excel spreadsheets, and even PowerPoint presentations to your documents.

Clicking the small button in the upper left corner of the WordPad screen which resembles an open book reveals a menu of the standard Windows commands, such as Open, Save, Print, and Page Setup, where you go to change the margins or add page numbers. Often used commands from this menu can be copied to the Quick Launch toolbar, also at the top left, for one-click access.

The bottom right area provides a Zoom slider, which can increase the size of a document for viewing without changing its size when printed, also a new feature of Word 2007.

WordPad is not the best choice for long documents, like those with chapters or research reports. It lacks the ability to add Headers and Footers, add automatic formatting, do a spell check, or set up collabo-

How I Fixed My Corrupted Recycle Bin

By Sandee Gimblett, a member of the Tacoma Open Group for Microcomputers, Tacoma, WA
www.tapcug.org maggiebs (at) harbornet.com

After recovering from a severe system crash on my laptop running XP, I discovered that I had a corrupted recycle bin. When I opened the Recycle Bin, no files at all would appear, yet when I chose to empty the Recycle Bin, the message would ask if I wanted to delete 76 files. I said not to delete the 76 files. I then created a test file, deleted it, and, again, no files would show-up when I opened the Recycle Bin. When I said to empty the recycle bin again, it now asked if I wanted to delete 77 files, which confirmed my suspicion that the deleted files were actually in the Recycle Bin, but I just couldn't get access to them.

I eventually discovered that the files were in the following directory, accessed via the Command Prompt, in a folder named: C:\Documents and Settings\Sandee\Recent.

After several attempts to repair the Recycle Bin without success, including running ReplBin.reg and other registry repair techniques, here is what finally worked:

1. My Computer

2. Local Disk (C:)

3. Tools

4. Folder Options

5. View

6. Clicked on SHOW HIDDEN FILES AND FOLDERS (I keep this option checked anyhow)

7. Un-clicked on HIDE PROTECTED OPERATING SYSTEM FILES (This should usually NEVER be unchecked, but I unchecked it so I could get access to the Recycle Bin operating system hidden folder)

8. Chose APPLY TO ALL FOLDERS, chose APPLY, and clicked OK.

9. Right-Clicked on RECYCLER file and renamed it to RECYCLER-BAD

10. Created a dummy file and deleted it.

11. Rechecked my Recycle Bin icon on my Desktop again, and...

12. VOILA! My newly deleted dummy file was there and all is well again!

(Continued from page 10)

rative editing. If you use a word-processor every day for a variety of tasks, some of which are complex, then invest in one of the comprehensive programs. There isn't much that Word 2007 can't do. But if you need only to create an occasional document – even something like a greeting card or party invitation — look into your Programs list in the Accessories folder for the newly upgraded and quite respectable program WordPad.

Club Election Notice

Election of officers will be held at our meeting on Wednesday, November 3rd, during the course of our meeting.

If you want an electronic ballot and did not get one, please contact Paul Howard at plhoward@verizon.net or Nick Wenri, who has agreed to be the election commissioner for this election. Electronic Ballots should be returned to Nick via email at wenrin@cox.net

E-books

By Dick Maybach n2nd(at)charter.net

E-books are files that contain the words and illustrations more commonly found in printed works, which you usually download from the Internet. You read them either with a hardware reader, such as Amazon's Kindle, or with software running on your home computer, smart phone, or PDA.

There are two general types of e-book, those protected by Digital Rights Management (DRM) and those that are not. DRM is a form of copy protection, and in comes in many forms, from relaxed to stringent. At one extreme, a relaxed DRM allows you to make a limited number of copies to other devices, while a stringent one allows no copies (even backups) at all and may require that you periodically renew your ability to read your e-book by contacting the vendor over the Internet. Stringent DRM ties an e-book to a particular device, and if that device dies or if you upgrade its hardware or software, you risk losing all the e-books stored on it. You can also lose them if the DRM vendor goes out of business. Some DRM-protected e-books can be backed up, and some vendors will provide free replacements if needed. As a result, the value of a DRM-protected book depends as much on the fine print in the sales agreement as on its contents.

There are many incompatible file formats for e-books, and no single reader can read them all. Hardware readers, such as Amazon's Kindle, Barnes & Noble's Nook, and Sony's Touch are heavily promoted. However, your choice of which one to buy isn't trivial; you can't read an Amazon e-book on a Barnes & Noble Nook, and you can't read a Barnes & Noble e-book on a Kindle. You can try out the e-book concept for much less than the several hundred dollar cost of a hardware reader by using a software reader on your home desktop, laptop, or netbook. In particular, both Amazon and Barnes & Noble offer free software versions of their hardware readers for the Windows and Mac operating systems. After trying the concept with a software reader, you are in a much better position to judge whether a hardware reader is worth its price. An advantage of Barnes & Noble's readers is that they let you read any of their e-books for free while you are in

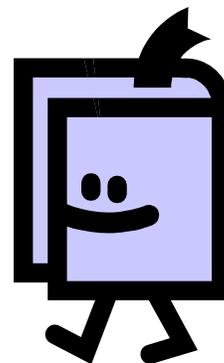their store, just like you can read any of their printed books there.

Amazon and Barnes & Noble have large collections of books, almost all with DRM protection. Google doesn't sell e-books; instead, they provides a means of searching for them among many on-line vendors; most of these use DRM, but few are DRM free and can be read on-line or downloaded. Since DRM-encumbered e-books may have limited lifetimes, you should consider borrowing them from a public library instead of buying them. Contact your library to open an e-book account and obtain the correct reader. Library books are DRM-restricted, which means that readers are available only for Windows and Macintosh users. Most libraries limit the number of books you can have checked, and usually must keep each one for two weeks, as there is no way to "return" one early, which may frustrate fast readers.

Another approach is to avoid DRM-encumbered books, which you can do in several ways. A wonderful source of DRM-free e-books is *Project Gutenberg*, http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Pag, which has over 30,000 e-books, which you can read on your PC, iPhone, Kindle, Sony Reader or portable device. Don't expect any recent releases here, as all the copyrights have expired. You can find other sources by making a Web search of "drm-free ebooks", which will direct you to (for example),

> http://blog.text2go.com/2008/01/04/
> the-top-13-drm-free-ebook-sites.

Some publishers, in particular O'Reilly, have recognized the problems associated with DRM and sell their e-books without it, and recently I purchased a book from Apress and found it included the ability to download a DRM-free e-book version at no cost. The book was a tutorial on gimp, an open-source equivalent to Photoshop, and the result is that I can read the print version at home, but I have the e-book version on my netbook which I can consult when I'm retouching digital photos on vacation.

This And That — When a Program Closes...

By Elizabeth B. Wright, Contributor to the Computer Club of Oklahoma City newsletter
www.ccokc.org wright599new (at) sbcglobal.net

You never know what your program will remember when you close it.

For that reason, if the last file you used in the program happened to be on removable media which has been detached from the computer, you might face a real problem the next time you turn on your computer. So, before terminating whatever program is using a file located on the removable media, CLOSE the file located on that media. Next, still in the program you have been using, locate on your internal hard disk any file which that program will recognize. Open it. You don't have to work on the file, just open it and close it so that the last file used by the program was from the hard disk. You don't necessarily have to do any editing of the file, but you can re-save it as an added step to help the program remember where it found the last opened file, or you can just close it without re-saving it. On my C:\ drive I keep a text file created in MS Notepad titled freecell. You guessed it, that is where I save a list of the games I have failed to win (in other words, LOST). It isn't particularly important, so if it somehow becomes corrupted or deleted, it can always be replaced with new information. This file is easily accessed and opened, after which, for a little added security, I re-save it before closing it.

If given a choice of formats, I prefer EPUB files, although PDF is also popular. With EPUB files, you can change the font size and the line lengths are automatically adjusted to fit into the reader's window. By contrast, PDF files are images of printed pages, and enlarging the font may require you to scroll horizontally. To read EPUB files you will need a software e-book reader, such as *fbreader*, available for Windows and Linux users at http://www.fbreader.org and for Mac users at http://gobunov.ru/projects.htm. This will read many free e-books, in several formats. There are many viewers for PDF files, including those for Linux. You can also find software readers that run on portable hardware, such as smart phones and PDAs.

Hopefully this satisfies the computers lust for usable information. I have spent too much time thinking a program had taken a permanent dive before remembering that the last work I did before turning off the machine was on a file located on a floppy disk, a camera memory card (either in a card reader or in the camera itself), or from some other form of removable media no longer accessible by the computer. If a file can no longer be physically accessed, many programs go into an endless loop trying to find it, causing your program to appear to be failing.

If you are lucky, using every trick you can think of, you might get the program to respond to a command to open a file on the hard disk. My all-time-favorite, Paint Shop Pro went to a "White Screen Of Death" recently every time I tried to use it. When my brain's memory kicked in I remembered the last thing I had done before closing PSP earlier was to download pictures from my camera's memory card. The memory card had been in a card reader and was removed to put it back in the camera AFTER I closed PSP. Downloading the camera photos was the last work I did before closing PSP. When next opening the program and getting that "WSOD" (see above), I found that even though various messages told me the program was not responding, the mouse would still operate and I was able to get "File/Open/ etc. etc." to open a photo located on my hard drive. Problem solved, at least for that incident.

Of course, you can never count on anything happening exactly the same way twice. So maybe, instead of "Death" for PSP it should just be "White Screen Of Coma." But your program might just stop working with no change in the screen at all. Quoting one of our knowledgeable members, "it all depends" on how the programmers wrote it.

Washington Area User Group Partners

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SharedView & Skype — Attending a Remote SIG Presentation

By Judi McDowell, President, Quad Cities Computer Society, Iowa / Illinois
http://www.qcs.org jmcdowell (at) mchsi.com

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A few Quad Cities Computer Society SIG leaders have been using Microsoft SharedView and Skype to allow participation from members remotely. We have been practicing with small test groups; and although SharedView is limited to 15 participants at one time we would like to provide detailed written instructions to all members.

First you need to download Skype, available at Skype.com. tinyurl.com/yjuzbbg Click the download button and then follow the instructions below provided by Skype for installation.

How Do I Install Skype?

Run the Skype Setup application. A window will open asking what you want to do with a file called **Skype-Setup.exe**. You might see a confirmation message, asking if you're sure you want to run this software. Click 'Run' again.

Follow the Setup Wizard

When the download has finished, the **Skype Setup Wizard** will appear and guide you through the rest of the installation.

Washington Area Computer User Group

WACUG Meetings will be held on November 20, 2010 from 12:30 to 3:30 pm. WACUG will hold joint meetings with **OPCUG** [www.olligmu.org/~opcug/] It is anticipated that all meetings, except June, July, and August, will be held at the **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute** [www.olli.gmu.edu/] at George Mason University, 4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax, VA, known as the Tallwood Campus.

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/

After the installation has finished, you can open Skype at any time by clicking the Skype icons located either on your desktop or in your system tray (this is found at the bottom right of your screen).

Now you need to add your "new contact," from the contacts menu. A hello window will appear where you type a brief message to introduce yourself; send and wait for the "contact" to accept you. After your invitation is accepted, the "contact" will appear in your contact list.

How Do I install SharedView?

Next you need to download Microsoft's SharedView, available at the following website **connect.microsoft.com/site94**

After downloading and installing SharedView you will have to obtain a Windows Live ID in order to use it. This is a simple procedure that requires providing an email address and a password.

Please Note:

If you do **NOT** obtain a Windows Live ID, you may still be able to join a session as a guest, but it will require a password. This password is unique to **each** session and

you will have to obtain it from the facilitator to join as a guest. A Windows Live ID makes joining a session much simpler.

On the night of a SharedView opportunity, you will receive a Skype call from "your contact" to start the audio.

*Open SharedView and sign in with your Windows Live ID and password.

*Once signed in, click on the button that says "join a session". Enter the session name.

*After clicking "Join now" at the bottom, wait for the search to find the session; when found, your name will pop up to the SharedView facilitator who must allow or deny your connection to their computer.

(Continued from page 14)

After the connection is established, you will see the desktop screen of the SIG Leader. Try again if you aren't accepted the first time. The facilitator may not have seen your request to join.

*The audio and facilitator's voice will be heard through the Skype connection. While listening to the presentation, remember to mute or turn down your microphone. Otherwise, every sound picked up on your end will be heard by all the other participants in addition to the facilitator's voice.

Only 15 people are allowed to join a session at one time so if demand exceeds that, it will be "first come first served". To assure the best results, let the SIG leader know in advance you plan to attend and if this is your first time, it is recommended that you have a short trial run a day or two prior to meeting night.

Attending a SIG in person is still preferable to a remote log in, but we have had a couple people use it when they were out of town and this is a great opportunity to keep in touch with your favorite SIG if you can't be there in person. To learn more about Shared-View and how you could use it with your friends for collaboration—Visit this website: Shared View User Assistance Home Page / tinyurl.com/a4lt7h

Who Invented the CD?

By Joan Craymer, Newsletter Editor, Australian Seniors Computer Club Association April 2010 issue, ASCCA newsletter www.ascca.org.au thewhistlers (at) optusnet.com.au

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What an amazing cavalcade of inventions we have seen in our lifetime. We have no sooner ceased to marvel at - or grasp one form of technological advance when the next innovation appears. Equally amazing has been the steady reduction of prices charged for these inventions in relation to the disposable income of the ordinary working person.

Remember those first vinyl LP records we had to save for weeks to buy. James T. Russell—who had displayed a flair for invention from the age of six when he made himself a remote-control battleship— earned a BA in Physics in 1953 at age 22 and joined GE where he was involved in some ground-breaking instrumental projects. By 1965 he was a senior scientist

NCTCUG Information

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Article Submissions

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

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COMPUCENTER BBS

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

If you are moving

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

Thank You!

at the Battelle Memorial Institute Laboratory in Richland WA and had his sights set on audio research and improvements.

Russell wanted to find a way to improve the sound quality and prevent the wear and tear caused by the physical contact of the needle in the groove of his records. He worked toward an idea to use light to achieve this and used his knowledge of digital data recording as employed in punch card or magnetic tape devices. He therefore aimed to make a device that could read the binary code 0 and 1 with dark and light. He realised that if he could make the code compact enough he could store large quantities of music and huge amounts of data.

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology writes; "Russell succeeded in inventing the first digital-to-optical recording and playback system (patented in 1970). He had found a way to record onto a photosensitive platter in tiny "bits" of light and dark, each one micron in diameter; a laser read the binary patterns, and a computer converted the data into an electronic signal --- which it was then comparatively simple to convert into an audible or visible transmission. Through the 1970s, Russell continued to refine the CD-ROM, adapting it to any form of data.

By 1985, Russell had earned 26 patents for CD-ROM technology. He then founded his own consulting firm, where he has continued to create and patent improvements in optical storage systems, along with bar code scanners, liquid crystal shutters, and other industrial optical instruments.

November 2010

1st Wed. (11/3)
7 p.m. General Meeting

2nd Wed. (11/10)
Online-Only Webinar using Skype
See http://www.nctcug.org/webinarsig.html

4th Wed (11/24)
7 p.m. Internet SIG

3rd Monday (11/22)
7 p.m. Board of Directors

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

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