The NCTCUG Journal

Things, Thinglets & Thingassos

By S. Jack Lewtschuk, President, MBUG-PC (Monterey Bay Users Group – Personal Computer), CA www.mbug.or Blacklion (at) royal.net

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photo: Bill Hyler, MBUG-PC

Cleaning Your Computer

During the summer you had your hands full cleaning your yard and patio. In the fall you winterized your home and prepared for the holidays. Now that all of that is over, it's time to spring clean your computer. When was the last time you opened up your "box" and looked inside? Don't tell me!

I found a very thorough guide explaining how to clean, what tools you need, why you should clean and yes, how often you should clean, courtesy of Computer Hope at www.computerhope.com/cleaning.htm#0.

Let me know what you found inside your box—I dare you! Is it still alive?

The Tiny Miracle

Have you ever received via e-mail, a URL like this:

http://search.atomz.com/search/?sp-q=Gang&getit=
Go&sp-a=00062d45-sp00000000&sp-advanced=1&sp-
p=all&sp-w-control=1&sp-w=alike&sp-date-range=-
1&sp-x=any&sp-c=100&sp-m=1&sp-s=0

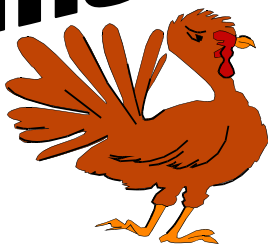… with only the top line underlined and in blue?

And when you clicked on it you got an "error 404," or did not get the website you expected?

That's because the URL should have included all four lines. You need to copy the whole thing (all four lines), and paste it into your browser, making sure that you do not introduce any spaces. A few websites are configured so that their URLs don't break, but not very many bother to do this.

I am guilty of sending long URLs via MBUG Listserv (see the back page to find out how to register). This has

Inside

Exploring Microsoft Windows 7 Beta 1
Part IV: What I've Discovered About Windows 7 (A)

Written by Lee Reynolds, Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, Florida Boca Bits, June 2009 www.bcrs.or leetutor (at) earthlink.net

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Lee continues an overview of what the new operating system might look like, as well as what it is likely to have for features.

The Start Menu And Its Properties

As you can see from the screenshots below, the Windows 7 Start Menu is very similar to the Vista Start Menu.

One difference is that doing a search in the search dialog box at the bottom will turn the entire Start Menu into a display of the search results.

In Vista, the search results only occupied the left half of the Start Menu.

Differences

If you right click the Start "orb" and select Properties from the Context Menu, then you can see a bit better some of the differences between Windows 7 and Vista.

For example:

- There is no Classic Start Menu option.

- There is no option for using Large Icons.

- There are no links for Internet or E-mail.

- The check box for Printers in Vista has changed to one for Devices and Printers in Windows 7.

- There is a check box for Recorded TV.

Power Button Action

And one of the nicest options added to Start Menu Properties is the ability to switch the Start Menu Power button usage among these different options: Switch User, Log off, Lock, Restart, Sleep, Hibernate, and Shut Down.
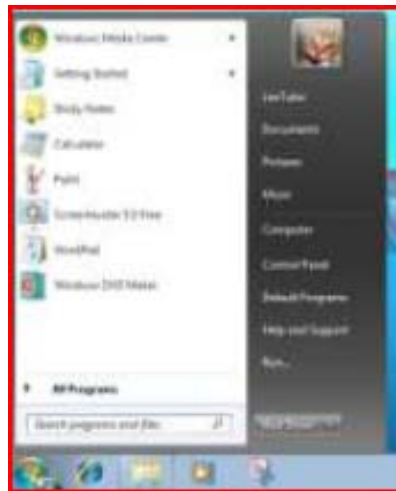

Figure 1 – Vista Start Menu
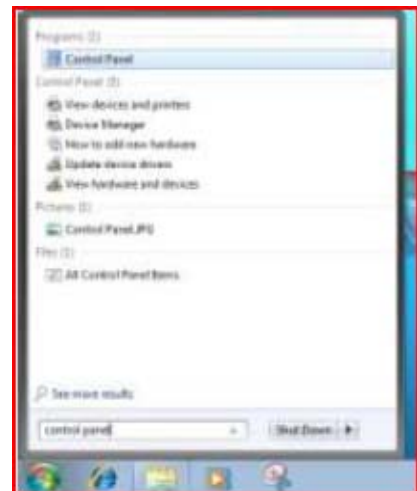

Figure 2 - Win7 Start Menu

Figure 3 – Win7 Start Menu Search

Taskbar Properties

- Right clicking the Taskbar, and selecting Proper-ties, takes you to the Taskbar Properties window, as in previous versions of Windows.

- This is similar to Vista's with a few exceptions:

- There is no option for Keep on top of other win-dows.

- There is no option for Group Similar Taskbar but-tons (they are always grouped.)

- There is no option for Show Quick Launch, since the Taskbar has been modified so that pseudo Quick Launch icons can be pinned to the Taskbar.

- There is no option for turning on or off windows pre-views.

- The Notification tab has been replaced by a sepa-rate window in Control Panel, and will be covered later.

- On the Toolbars tab, Quick Launch, Windows Media Player, and Documents are missing op-tions.

- A new feature is the ability to select the location on your screen of your Taskbar from the Taskbar Proper-ties page. (Always before, in previous ver-sions of Windows, you had to drag the Taskbar to one of the four edges of the screen.)

Control Panel

The overall look of Control Panel in Windows 7 hasn't changed that much from Vista if you look at the two screenshots below:

But there are a number of under-the-hood differ-ences. First, there is no "Classic View" link in the left pane of Control, as there was in Windows XP and Vista. Instead, you click on the link for "All Items":

Figure 10 shows the Classic view of Control Panel in Vista:

Figure 11 shows Control Panel (All Items) under Windows 7:

In my Control Panel Classic view in Vista on my desk-top pc, there are 58 different applets. In my Virtual Pc version of Windows 7, there are 57 under All Items.

Now as you compare all the items in Vista and Win-dows 7, you will see that there are a number of missing applets, a number of new applets, and a number of modified applets.

Missing And Replaced Applets

Some of the missing applets in Windows 7 are: Add Hardware, People Near Me, and Windows Sidebar Properties.

Figure 4 – Vista Start Menu

Figure 5 – Vista Start Menu

Figure 6 – Win7 Start Menu

The Welcome Center applet of Vista has been re-placed in Windows 7 by one called Getting Started.

Since there are still Gadgets in Windows 7, but no Sidebar to mount them on, the Windows Sidebar Proper-ties applet of Vista has been replaced by Desk-top Gadgets.

The Printers applet of Vista has been replaced by one called Devices and Printers. Besides printers, this new applet can also handle devices that are connected ex-ternally to the computer, including devices connected wirelessly or over the network, through USB cables, Bluetooth, Wireless USB, Wi-Fi or other wireless connections.

System Restore in Vista was one of the tasks in the left pane of the window for the System applet. Under Windows 7, it has its own applet called Recovery.

Windows Security Center is another applet in Vista that has been redistributed differently in Windows 7. Security Center enabled you to handle the Firewall, Automatic Updating, use of an Anti-virus program and the handling of malware by Windows Defender. It also allowed you to turn on User Account Control if it was disabled.

Vista also had an applet called Problem Reports and Solutions which allowed you to research and report problems in your computer. In Windows 7, most of this is handled in the new applet called Action Center.

Vista's feature called User Account Control aggra-vated a lot of people because it was so continually intrusive on their attempts to do anything with their computers. Many people turned off UAC in Vista, even though this made them much more vulnerable to the introduction of malware on their pcs. Win-dows 7 has a new version of User Account Control which is much more versatile and less intrusive. You use a slider bar to adjust between 4 different settings. The top setting corresponds to Vista's only setting of UAC "on." The bottom setting corre-sponds to Vista's setting of UAC "off." In between are two intermediary settings:

1) Notify me when programs try to make changes to my computer, but don't notify me when I make changes to Windows settings

2) Notify me only when programs try to make changes to my computer (do not dim my desktop.)

Option 1 above is the default option when Windows 7 is installed.

New Applets

There are a number of other new applets in Win-dows 7 with no counterpart in Vista, including:

• ClearType Text Tuner, which helps make the text on the screen easier to read

Figure 7 – Win7 Power Button Action

Figure 8 – Vista Taskbar Properties

Figure 9 – Win7 Taskbar Properties

- Credential Manager, which helps manage user names and passwords and other credentials used to log on to websites, other computers, etc.

- Default Location, which can be used to store your zip code, country/region, and latitude and longitude for use when there is no location sensor such as a GPS receiver attached to the computer Display, which allows a choice between Smaller, Medium, and Larger sizes for text and other items to make the screen easier to read

- HomeGroup, which is the new way of sharing data and other resources in a home network environment

- Notification Area Icons, which allows control of which icons and notification messages appear in the Notification Area of the Taskbar

- RemoteApp and Desktop Connections, which allows you to connect to desktops and programs at your work-place; this takes the place of the Remote Desktop and Remote Assistance capabilities of Windows Vista and XP

- System Icons, which allows control of the following icons and notifications in the Notification Area of the Taskbar: Clock, Volume, Network, Power, and Action Center

- Troubleshooting, which allows access to various troubleshooting wizards on computer problems under the following general categories: Programs, Hardware and Sound, Network and Internet, Appearance and Personalization, System and Security.

Most of the other applets that Vista and Windows 7 have in common have either not changed at all, or have relatively minor differences.

Figure 10 – Vista Control Panel Classic

Figure 11 - Win7 Control Panel All Items

My PayPal Account's Been Hacked!
By Steve Bass

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E-mail from PayPal

The e-mail from PayPal said I'd sent $400 to a gaming firm in Germany. It's a dopey phishing expedition, I thought, and authentic-looking, for sure, but nothing to worry about.

The trouble was that when I logged on to PayPal, I really did have a $400 withdrawal. It was clear that someone had my password.

Quick Password Tips

Here are the three essential things you need to know about password security:

- Use a password generator, a program that will create a long, complicated password.

- Don't ever use dictionary words, even if you stick in symbols, like bill$gate$. They're very easy to break using simple hacker programs. (LOL—Thanks, Rod.)

- Use a different password for every important site. Using the same password on every site, especially critical ones, such as banking, is risky. Imagine using your one password on an unsavory, and possibly unscrupulous site. With that golden password, and a few guesses on your login name—stevebass, steve_bass, sbass—and they're in like Flynn.

Steve Bass is a former Contributing Editor with PC World, a 23 year veteran of PIBMUG, and a founding member of APCUG. He's also the author of *PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things about Your Personal Computer*, O'Reilly Press. It's available on Amazon at dirt cheap prices.
     http://snipurl.com/annoy

This column originally appeared in Bass's TechBite newsletter. Subscribe to Bass's free weekly newsletter and read Bass's blog at www.snurl.com/techbiteblog.
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Who's Got My Password?

I contacted PayPal (888-221-1161), supplied the details, and they opened up a case. My account is frozen and I don't doubt PayPal will credit me for the loss. (As I started editing this newsletter, PayPal reversed the charges.) PayPal is investigating, but I don't think they'll ever find out how someone got into my account, though it was clear the person had my password. The rep said I probably fell for a well-crafted e-mail spoof.

That's a blow to my ego. I see myself as suspicious—verging on paranoid—when it comes to phishing e-mails. What better prize than bragging rights to hacking a PC World guy, right? So I'm as vigilant as my dog is when I try to get her to take a pill wrapped in peanut butter. (Hey, you can't fool me, pal, she probably thinks...)

If an e-mail—suspicious or not—refers to any of my important accounts and provides a link to click, I ignore the offer. It's safer to manually type the URL into my browser's address field. And yes, I'll cover phishing hassles—and ways to guard against it—in a future newsletter.

Password: z24x680uBS4!44

I'm also careful with my passwords and, at least until now, thought they were super stealthy. For example, on PayPal I used four numbers, a symbol, and three letters. According to Microsoft's Password Checker, my standard password pattern -- 1600%wtf—is strong. But it could be better.

Microsoft says that the most effective passwords are 14 characters and have a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and a symbol or two. For example, z24x680uBS4!44 is strong enough for them to call it "best."

Test your passwords on Microsoft's site and see how well they stand up. Then browse Microsoft's

excellent Strong passwords: How to create and use them. I promise you'll learn something. http://tinyurl.com/2e7tm

Use Microsoft's Password checker to test your password's strength. You might be surprised. http://tinyurl.com/ypc3d

Generating Strong Passwords

Creating a strong password is easy, provided you don't try to think one up on your own. There are dozens of Web sites that'll create passwords, but I don't use any of them. The last thing I'll do is trust someone online watching me create new passwords. Instead, download Password Generator, a freebie, and crank out all sorts of 14-character passwords. http://tinyurl.com/4j8e

Keeping Track of Your Passwords

I just looked and counted roughly 220 sites I use that require a password.

Some site passwords, however, are immaterial. For instance, I use a simple-to-remember word for spots I rarely visit, places such as newspapers that force you to register and log in just to read articles, or tech sites with forum messages.

However, ever since the PayPal fiasco, I've changed every significant password on my system to a 14-digit gorilla.

Remembering all those passwords is a PITA , so you ought to consider using a password management tool. There are lots available. Many people like KeePass, a

freebie; others swear by LargeSoft's $30 Password Manager . I anticipate easily 100 e-mails—no make that 200 -- kvetching that I haven't mentioned your favorite. But as far as I'm concerned, RoboForm is the best one around, and I've used it since it was first introduced.

RoboForm, The Master at Passwords

RoboForm is a $30 program with more features for password management, privacy, and password identification than any other program I know. You provide RoboForm with all the vitals you might need to complete a site's form—name, address, phone numbers, and even credit card numbers. When you click the Fill Forms button, the program does just that. I've created multiple identities, each with different info. For instance, I have one with MasterCard info, another with VISA accounts. I have another identify I call "anonymous" that I use to fill in forms on sites that I'll never visit again.

Enter data into RoboForm's Identity card and fill in online forms.

Click a Web site from the RoboForm Passcard screen, and RoboForm transports your Web browser to the site, logging you in if necessary. Need an industrial-strength password? RoboForm will generate one for you. And don't worry about security: RoboForm is itself password-protected. The program will also safely send an encrypted password through e-mail to another RoboForm user. (I was recently discussing with my wife the fact that neither of us can function without it.)

BTW, RoboForm foils keyloggers (programs that watch keystrokes) because instead of typing, RoboForm inserts characters into form fields.
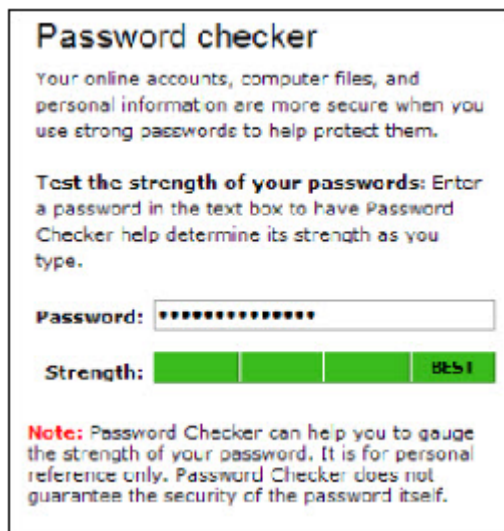
Beneath The Surface: DeepPeeping the Web

By Jerry Goldstein, Vice President & Newsletter Editor, The PCUG of CT
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Last summer Google announced it had passed the one trillionth mark in its list of known and searchable Web pages.

If you think Google does the best job of searching the World Wide Web you will be in for a big surprise. By 'big' I mean a search engine that goes way beyond standard search engines like Google, which only look at the surface of the Web compared to the vast, deep, and so far uncharted depths of the Web. I say "you will be in for a big surprise" because a deeper search engine is only in it's initial research stages.

Standard search engines only skim the surface of the Web. Kind of like you're looking over the surface of the ocean, instead of looking into its vast undersea life. The plan is to create a search engine that will open 90% of the Web to searches.

A study at the University of Utah is trying to find a way. The study searches typed text rather than the hyperlinks that the present search engines use. A beta version of DeepPeep is available at: http://www.deeppeep.org.

We have a long way to go but eventually almost the entirety of the Web will be searchable. Web pages exist already that tell you the best taxi fare, flight schedules, and shopping catalogs. DeepPeep wants to give you access to this information. A whole new way of searching has to be worked out first.

Scientists have said that 90% of what we know was discovered in the last 50 years. DeepPeep is working out a way to get that knowledge to you.

WHAT WE SEE

WHAT WE MISS

It's out there . . .

DeepPeep is finding the way to get it to you.

(Continued from page 7)

Here's a summary of RoboForm's features (http://www.roboform.com/features.htm), a comprehensive FAQ (http://www.roboform.com/faq.htm) with answers to your most technical RoboForm questions and a way to compare the free and Pro versions (http://www.roboform.com/why-pro.htm).

If you need portability, RoboForm2Go gives you the same protection when you carry your passwords on a flash drive and use it outside the office. Both the RoboForm program and your password files reside on a USB key, so you can take them from one computer to another. The tool costs $40, but if you buy it at the same time you get RoboForm, the price drops to $20. If you dig around, you'll occasionally find discounts. (Google RoboForm discount.)

Siber Systems offers a 30-day trial of both products. They work in all versions of Windows and support IE and Firefox, but not Google Chrome, Opera, or a few other browsers. Take a look at the compatibility list. http://www.roboform.com/browsers.htm

There's lots more to say about password management, but I'm almost out of space. So while you're hot on the topic, read Bitmill's smart series of Password Security 101 articles. They're less basic than you might imagine. http://www.thebitmill.com/articles

How Can I Tweak Firefox and Thunderbird to Be As Great as People Say They Are?

By Gabe Goldberg, Computers and Publishing, Inc. Tiplet (at) gabegold.com

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One of the Internet's many beauties is the diversity of choices available—for everything. There are multiple search engines, Web browsers, ISPs (Internet service providers), operating systems (Windows, Linux, Mac). This means that no two people have precisely the same computing setup or online experience and leads to hours of fun-filled arguments about whose choices are best.

In fact, competition works to everyone's advantage: no matter what your choice is for a given function, the vendor or manufacturer knows that you have alternatives and must hustle to keep your loyalty. The "browser wars"—first when Microsoft pushed Internet Explorer (IE) development to catch innovator Netscape and more recently with Mozilla Firefox stealing market share back from IE (and, of course, with contributions from Opera, Chrome, and other contenders) -- have generated beneficial innovation and evolution.

Recent reports show Firefox taking market share from Internet Explorer—but Microsoft is introducing Internet Explorer Version 8, so the horse race continues. So it's worth exploring (pun intended) why software like Firefox, which must be added to Windows systems which by default include IE, can be so successful.

In addition to speed and security superior to at least earlier IE versions, Firefox and its Mozilla sibling email client Thunderbird provide powerful customization tools. In Firefox, click Tools and then Options. Explore the tabs: Main, Tabs, Content, applications, Privacy, Security, and Advanced; within Advanced, subtabs address different functions. For each options group, the Help button displays specific information describing choices available.

You needn't study and learn all options at once but it's worth occasionally browsing what you can tweak. Firefox defaults are certainly pleasant and workable

Microsoft Releases Internet Explorer 8

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio Talk Show Host Iwilsker (at) apcug.net

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Websites

http://www.microsoft.com/ie

http://www.ieaddons.com/en

Microsoft has released the latest iteration of its ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer version 8 (IE 8). This browser is for all versions of XP and Vista, and is a 16.1mb download for XP.

I had tried one of the early beta (pre-release) builds of IE 8, and was impressed by its features and speed, a substantial improvement over what I felt was a lethargic Internet Explorer 7. Now I have downloaded and installed IE 8 on all of my computers, and my first impressions of it are quite positive. I have been using Firefox, IE's major competitor, almost exclusively for several years. I was not alone in using Firefox instead of IE, as Firefox has been taking market share from IE for years as it has generally offered more speed, features, and security than IE. Now with IE 8, Firefox has a worthy competitor which has added features, speed and security to challenge the gains made in the marketplace by Firefox.

Within minutes of its release, I downloaded the new version of IE 8 on my work computer. I went directly to Microsoft's IE website at www.microsoft.com/ie to download IE . Microsoft identified my operating system, and proceeded to connect me to the proper variety of IE 8, which I downloaded. The installation process was smooth, with several informational windows appearing with install options. One of the first windows to appear was a statement that the IE 8 install utility was going to download the latest version of Windows Malicious Software Removal Tool, and scan my computer for malware prior to the installation of IE 8. My computer was free of any detected malware, and the installation continued. A reboot was required in order to complete the IE 8 process, which I allowed. After the reboot, a small window appeared displaying the setup sequences of the new software. Subsequent windows offered me the opportunity to install add-ons, and select default search engines. IE 8 imported my selections from IE 7, and asked if I wanted to keep my IE 7 defaults and use them in IE 8, which I did. The final window displayed correctly identified that I had other browsers installed on my computer, including Firefox, Opera, and Safari, and asked if I wanted to import bookmarks (favorites) and feeds from them; I selected yes, and data was imported from my other browsers into IE 8, making them immediately available on that platform. IE 8 did indeed load faster than IE 7 ever loaded, and web pages appeared to load faster, but I have no empirical data to corroborate that.

IE 8 is more feature rich than IE 7, and in many ways appears to emulate the finer points available in Firefox. One feature in IE 8 that offers improved possibilities is "Accelerators" which provide quick access to information by simply highlighting a word, phrase, address, or other item on a webpage. If the proper accelerators are installed, then appropriate information in the form of maps, web searches, translations, email, blogs, and other relevant resources and outputs are immediately displayed.

Another interesting feature in IE 8 that may be of interest to many users is "Web Slices", where the user can automatically monitor desired information, displaying updated information as it becomes available. Web Slices can monitor auctions, sports scores, weather, stock quotes, and other dynamic content, and can directly provide that updated information, without user intervention. If a Web Slice is available on a web page, a green icon will appear in the top right corner of the page; clicking on this icon will add the "slice" to the favorites bar, enabling real-time tracking of the selection. When new information is available about the selected web slices, the relevant web slice will be highlighted. Clicking on the highlight will take the user directly to the updated information.

IE 8 offers a "Smart Address Bar" which displays recommendations as a web address is typed in the address bar. The suggestions are distilled from the browsing history, favorites, and previously selected feeds, as well as Windows Live Search. If a single word is typed in the address bar, the Smart Address Bar will reach out and try to match the term against domain names, making web surfing faster and more efficient.

I frequently go online to show my L.I.T. students information on the web. Sometimes the fonts on the web pages are so small, that students in the back of the classroom can not view the displayed content. IE 8 solves that problem with its enhanced zoom feature, "Improved Zoom". This feature improves the resolution and readability of a webpage, while maintaining the desired layout. Clicking on VIEW – ZOOM allows the user to zoom in or out on a webpage, from 50% (zoom out, smaller text, more information displayed) to 400% (zoom in, larger text, less information displayed).

Web surfers are often concerned about their personal privacy while browsing on the net. IE 8 offers a feature, "InPrivate" that allows the user to control the protection of his personal information while online. When selected, InPrivate deletes the browsing history, temporary internet files, filled forms, cookies, usernames, and passwords when closing the browser, leaving no traces of browsing or search history on the computer.

Sometimes a website appears to crash the browser while being viewed, shutting down all of the opened tabs, and requiring a reloading of the browser. IE 8 offers "Automatic Crash Recovery" where if the content in a tab crashes, the other opened tabs are unaffected, such that other opened pages are not closed or lost unexpectedly. IE 8 will attempt to recover the lost tab once it has identified and resolved the problem.

Phishing, identity theft, and web-borne malware have become endemic, and a threat to web users. IE 8 includes a "SmartScreen Filter" which incorporates anti-phishing tools to protect the user from imposter websites designed to trick the user into entering his personal information. The SmartScreen Filter also incorporates sophisticated anti-malware capabilities to help prevent web-borne adware, spyware, and other dangerous software from installing itself on the users' computer. If a dangerous website is opened and detected, the address bar and window will turn red on the page, and a prominent warning will be displayed on the red background. Other protection is provided by a cross site scripting (XSS) filter, which can detect and protect from malicious code execution while online, providing additional protection. A cute feature, which can help protect from phishing and identity theft is "domain highlighting" which highlights the domain name in the address bar, with the remainder of the address string in gray, displaying the true identity of the website.

Internet Explorer 8 is much improved over version 7, with improved security and enhanced features. Users of earlier versions of IE should upgrade to IE 8. Users of other browsers should give IE 8 a try, as they may be pleasantly surprised. Even though I have been a loyal Firefox user for several years, I will be using IE 8 far more than I ever used IE 7.

Club Notices

The NCTCUG Annual Meeting and election of officers and board members results from October 7, 2009: The proposed slate was elected.

There will be a special meeting Nov. 4th to vote on amendments to the Club Constitution & Bylaws. See the web site for details. E-ballots are available for this as well — contact Paul Howard if you did not receive one.

Cyber Crime Fighters: Tales from the Trenches

Book review by Steven M. Breitbart, Director, NOCCC (North Orange County Computer Club, California) Orange Bytes, July 2009
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I have never wanted one of my book reviews to be on Page 1 of the Orange Bytes before now. The Internet has become an entity where all of the old evils are amplified and expanded, and new evils have been created. As the book says "Once again, computer technology and the Internet is a double edged sword, providing tools both for those involved in illegal drug activity as well as for those seeking justice." You can just as easily plug in identity theft, child pornography or any other crime that can be committed using the Internet.

This book explores many, if not most of the crimes committed using the Internet. The authors, Felicia Donovan and Kristyn Bernier have "over 25 years of combined law enforcement experience." They discuss cyber stalking, identity theft, online dating, child pornography, social networks, illegal drugs and peer-to-peer network crimes. The crimes range from bullying, stalking or stealing the victims' identity all the way to murder.

The book is written for the ordinary person who is not an IT professional. They describe an honest, if pessimistic view of the Internet. It appears that someone illegally exchanging songs using a peer-to-peer network is more likely to be sued by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) for music piracy than people who acquire child pornography are to be arrested by law enforcement.

One thing I have learned from this book is that if you have a business with any sort of network and access to the Internet, you must either have an IT person or be

the IT person yourself. You must have policies clearly defining acceptable uses of business computers and make sure every employee understand the risks involved of visiting risky web sites. You must have procedures, hardware and software in place to make sure nothing sensitive gets out or nothing dangerous, such as spyware and viruses, get in.
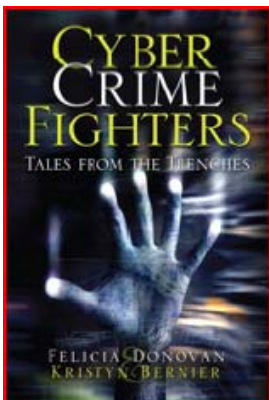
Another thing is that you should initiate all actions and not respond to web sites or emails offering any type of get-rich quick scheme or warning. If you get an email asking you to send money, promising that you'll get back more, it's probably one of many types of scams. If the scam isn't asking to you to send money, it's asking for enough information so they can steal it directly out of your bank accounts - having acquired your name, user identification and password. The authors describe how pedophiles have posed as children and get information from real children, who give out all sorts of information on Facebook, MySpace or other social networking web sites.

Sometimes they get the children to do things in front of their webcams. Once recorded, these videos are circulated among the community of pedophiles. If the pedophiles can get the children to meet them in person, they are often molested or worse.

A great thing about the book is that they include a lot of information on how to protect yourself, your family and your business, but it is scattered all over the book. What we all need is a pamphlet summarizing all the recommended procedures and different web sites we can go to for help.

The whole thing reminds me of an episode of the television show Criminal Minds. The victim asks FBI Agent Hotchner "How many of these people are out there?" He replies, "More than you want to know." While the characters were not talking about Cyber Crime, the result is the same. As long as I mentioned a television show, I would like to thank the authors for Appendix B, which describes the incredible differences between television's version of law enforcement and the real thing. It seems to me that animated cartoons resemble reality more.

There are seventeen chapters in the book, plus two appendices. Sixteen of the chapters are chock full of case after case of criminal activities committed using the Internet. While it seems repetitive and tedious, one must remember that this is a small sample of what law enforcement and other agencies find. The book usually describes what happened to the victims

and whether the criminals were caught. As one would expect, it doesn't usually cover the techniques that law enforcement uses too much. Law enforcement is apparently at such a disadvantage in terms of funding, personnel and legal requirements that they cannot afford to give away any information.

Law enforcement is fighting an uphill battle. A lot of the "evil" is coming in from other countries, the criminals are able to remain anonymous on the Internet, and law enforcement is constantly crippled by a lack of budget or personnel for specialized squads. Add to this the fact that the laws applying to cyber crime vary from state to state, technical challenges and other factors; you get a very pessimistic picture. The Internet is an almost lawless place and it is up to the user to be vigilant.

There are a few small issues I have with the book. The title did not excite me; the word "trenches" is used to mean everything from real world experiences to military operations to undercover investigations; how about "online front line" instead. They repeat various agency names and their acronyms over and over. Either use the full name once along with the acronym, then use just the acronym for, say, the rest of the chapter. The photographs they used for the Internet address line that says "https" and the padlock icon weren't clear enough to see. Also, in the chapter where they describe botnets, they begin with a clear description. Two pages later, they say they will define botnets "later" - but they already have.

The last chapter is "How We Would Combat Cyber Crime." They have many good ideas and I hope the new Cybersecurity Czar will at least listen to the advice of these authors.

I highly recommend this book for anyone who uses the Internet.

It will certainly be too simple for people already involved in computer security. However, the rest of us need to understand what can happen if we are unaware of the pitfalls of using the Internet.

Cyber Crime Fighters: Tales from the Trenches, by Felecia Donovan and Kristyn Bernier; ©2009 Pearson Education, Inc. (part of Addison-Wesley Professional) Boston, MA. ISBN-13: 978-0-7897-3922-3; ISBN-10: 0-7897-3922-4.

List price is $21.99, but is available for $17.15 at Amazon.com. If your group is a member of the Pearson User Group program, members will receive a 35% discount. Purchase of the book includes a free 45-day online edition through Safari Bookshelf.

but by making your own decisions, you can customize the browser to accommodate your unique preferences. On the Advanced/Update tab, I recommend checking all three boxes to check for updates, and then selecting "Ask me what to do" about updates. That way you'll find out about available updates and control when they're downloaded and installed.

But there's more! Click Tools, then Add-ons, then Get Add-ons, to open a wonderful catalogue of small tools you can add to perform new functions. These are available because Firefox is open source software, meaning it's developed, supported, and maintained by volunteers. While the most important browser functions are included in the basic browser, hundreds of developers produce add-on modules to extend it.

You'll initially see a few Recommended add-ons; click See All Recommended Add-ons to visit the Web site of all-things-add-ons. On the left, you'll see broad categories (e.g., Appearance, Bookmarks, Search Tools); the main display shows the most popular tools.

Explore categories in which you're most interested. But before installing any, browse for alternatives, since several add-ons may perform similar functions. Look at ratings (number of stars) and number of downloads reported—obviously a highly-rated add-on being downloaded 150,000 times a week is a safer bet than a less-popular lesser-rated choice. And read reviews for real-people descriptions of how add-ons work—or don't. Note which Firefox versions an add-on supports, since some may need a relatively new version and others may not have yet been updated for them.

Thunderbird handles options and add-ons in a similar fashion. For perspective, I have 15 Firefox and 9 Thunderbird add-ons installed and occasionally shop for yet more to improve my browsing and email experience.

(Continued from page 1)

caused some of our members to be confused by the split URL. I appreciate the fact that recently someone took the time to remind me about a great solution for this problem. Years ago I knew about this but completely forgot (you can call it my "senior moment").

One solution is Tiny URL or www.tinyurl.co. All you have to do is go to that URL and create a shortcut for future use. The instructions are simple:

1. Copy the giant URL.

2. Paste it in the slot provided by Tiny.

3. Click on the button provided.

And, like magic, the long four line URL becomes tiny, is automatically copied to your clipboard, and looks more like http://tinyurl.com/52fuz. Surprised? Try it, you'll like it, and it's FREE! By the way, some time ago Tiny URL was reported to contain malware, however the manufacturer assures us that the problem has been rectified.

Also, another MBUG member suggests to try adding "< >" brackets to prevent URLs from falling apart.

Another program similar to Tiny URL is at www.webware.com/8301-1_109-9898698-2.html?tag=b (or I could say: http://tinyurl.com/57dqy)!

Washington Area Computer User Group

WACUG Meeting will be held on November 21, 2009 from 12:30 to 3:30 pm. Starting with the January 17th, 2009 meeting, 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.

Topic: Comparisons of Internet shopping web sites
        Using EBay - for the buyer

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

Are You The Administrator?

If you need to quickly tell if you are currently logged onto a PC as a Local Administrator of the Windows server, right click on the "Start" button. If you see "Open All Users" rather than just "Open," the account is in the Local Administrators group.

Manual! Manual! My Kingdom for a Manual!

Have you had an instant when you had a question or a problem with one of your 21st century electronic gadgets and the dog ate the manual? Have no fear bunky, SmartComputing to the rescue! Go to www.retrevo.com/samples/index.htm.

What's In Your Wallet?

Credit Cards

While two credit cards might act and look alike, levels of consumer protection that each type of credit card provides can be different. Under federal law, if someone steals your credit card you're only responsible to pay the first $50 of unauthorized charges. However, if you notify the credit card issuer before a thief is able to make any charges, you may be free from all liability. If the credit card is not physically present when an unauthorized or fraudulent purchase is made (such as over the Internet), you're also free from liability for those charges.

MasterCard and Visa offer zero-liability protection where you don't have to pay any charges if someone uses your credit card to make an unauthorized purchase. Many credit cards offer additional benefits and supply a yearly summary of your spending.

Debit Cards

A debit card is a direct key to your bank account. The protection offered for debit card fraud is similar to credit cards but with a few exceptions. For example,

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your liability under federal law is limited to $50, the same as for a credit card, but only if you notify the issuer within two business days of discovering the card's loss or theft. Your liability for debit card fraud can jump up to $500 if you don't report the loss or theft within that time.

Debit cards provide a direct pass to you bank account. You may also face cash flow problems and bounced-check fees when thieves clean out your bank accounts.

If you are the type of person who gives a passing glance to your monthly bank statement, you could be totally liable for any fraudulent debit card charges if you wait 60 days or more from the time your statement is mailed.

Visa and MasterCard zero-liability protection applies to your debit card with them but only for transactions that do not involve the use of your PIN (personal identification number).

Additional protection against fraudulent use of your credit or debit cards may be available through your homeowner's or renter's insurance. Check your policy or with your agent for more information about your coverage.

You should avoid using your debit card for any online purchase or for things which are expensive. Why? The main reason is that it is much easier to dispute a charge when you use your credit card. If the gold-plated, limited-edition, hip-swinging Elvis wall clock arrives broken, your credit card company will remove the charge until the problem is resolved. With your debit card you are stuck dealing with the merchant directly to resolve any problems with a purchase. Don't fall for rumors about not signing your cards—all banks insist that you are much safer signing your cards immediately upon receiving them.

Just to make sure that you have all the necessary information should you become a victim of stolen or lost cards and other important documents:

1. Empty your wallet.

2. Place all your credit/debit cards and important documents on your scanner or copying machine.

3. Make copies of your cards, front and back.

4. Place the copy in a safe place: a safety deposit box, fire safe, or even your refrigerator is better than a desk drawer (in case of fire, the chances for survival of contents in your refrigerator are pretty good).

NCTCUG Information

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

Club Information call: 301-577-7899   **Web Site: www.nctcug.org**

Officers and Directors

All officer terms expire 2010

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Lorrin Garson	2011	703-938-7907
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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

Membership Policy

The National Capital Technology and Computer Users Group, Inc. is a non-profit [501(c)(3)] organization founded in 1978 to educate users of all Tandy computers and MS-DOS compatible computers. Membership dues are $25.00 (U.S.Funds) per year, with a $5 surcharge for international mail. Membership in NCTCUG includes membership in all SIGs, access to the BBS and software libraries, and subscription to the Journal published 8 times per year. Applications may be obtained at any club meeting, by downloading from the BBS, by calling one of the officers or board members, or by writing to the club. A sample newsletter, membership application and related information may be obtained by enclosing $1 and mailing your request to Jim Rhodes, 201 S. Kensington Street, Arlington VA 22204.

Advertisement Policy

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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!

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5. Check your wallet periodically. Thieves often steal just one credit card to make sure that you don't notice it's gone. By the time you notice, it's too late.

NOTE: When you give your card to a person to pay a bill, make sure that when you get it back it's your card and not an expired card belonging to someone else!

One last precaution: NEVER carry your Social Security card around with you.

The Third Generation of USB

Many of you recall the old USB (Universal Serial Bus) 1.1. Its time passed when the much faster USB 2.0 was invented—it's the USB we all use now to connect our peripherals (mouses, printers, flash drives, etc.).

Last November we were given some good news:

Good news #1: by 2010 we will be able to buy USB 3.0.

Good news #2: it will be 10 times faster than USB 2.0 and it will feature improved power efficiency.

Good news #3: USB 3.0 will be backwards compatible with USB 2.0 and 1.1 devices, which means that we will have time to upgrade our peripheral devices when we are ready.

November 2009

1st Wed. (11/4)
7 p.m. General Meeting

4th Wed (11/25)
7 p.m. Internet SIG

3rd Monday (11/23)
7 p.m. Board of Directors

All 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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