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Keeping Up

by Paul Howard (NCTCUG)

The NCTCUG gang has been fooling around with Skype video calling, and similar applications, as we try to find ways to share meetings beyond the limits of our Carlin Hall location. Mel Mikosinski's done a ton of research, trying to find software that works, and solutions to the inevitable challenges.

Some evenings, you'd think we were doing a remake of a Marx Brothers movie, as some glitch in one of the participant's systems has the rest of us searching for a wide-line marker so we can write messages like "No Sound—I can't hear you!" on a piece of paper—and then hold them up to our web cams.

Still, it's kind of amazing that for the price of a webcam, we can actually see and talk to each other, without spending multi-kilobucks, like the really expensive video conference rooms some of us built and used, back in the world of employment—and some still are. We've had sessions with participants in Virginia, Maryland, and New Mexico.



We're not really sure yet whether this is one of those sufficiently advanced technologies that's akin to magic, but it's been kinda fun to fool around with. So far, one or more of us has had to reboot their computers, sometimes to a power-off, cold boot condition, during our sessions, but we're hoping that perhaps that won't be necessary with the release of the 5.0 version of the Skype software. Since loading the new software, I'm no longer getting a BSOD -- blue screen of death - - as I shut down my Win 7 Professional, 64 bit computer, so that's an improvement.

This latest version of Skype is supposedly capable of accommodating nine participants. Our experiments with the beta version consistently crashed when adding the eighth conferee. In checking the Skype website, I just noticed these suggestions:

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Discovering Windows 7 – Part 2

By Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, Washington
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Last month we looked at some of the new Taskbar and Start Menu features. We've only scratched the surface. This month we'll look at some more really useful features.

Say you have a program on your Start menu that you use a lot. Open your Start Menu, point at it and right-click. If you click on the little triangle on the right side of the program label you'll see a list of the last files you open using this program. Now all you need to do is click on the one you want to access it. But wait! Instead of clicking on the triangle, place your mouse pointer to the left of the triangle area and right-click. In the menu that opens you have a choice to pin the program to the Start Menu (which means that it will always be near the top for you) or pinning it to the Task Bar. I suggest pinning it to the task bar. Now to run the program instead of clicking on the Start Menu button and then double-clicking on the program name, all you have to do is point at the program on the Taskbar and click once to run it. This "trick" also works with programs on the Start Menu that are listed under "all Programs".

Let's take this a step further. Suppose the program you just pinned to the taskbar is a program like Microsoft Word or Excel. Left-clicking on the program icon starts the program. If you right-click on the icon you'll see a list of the ten most recent files that were opened with it. You'll also notice, that if you point at one of these files, you can pin it to the top of this "recent" list. You can also drag the names of files up and down on the list to change their relative position. Finally, the name of the program (i.e. Excel) can be found at the bottom of the list so you have yet another way to click and run the program. Don't feel the need for this program to be pinned to your taskbar or Start Menu? Just "unpin" it. This doesn't remove the program from your computer, it just removes the link.

Suppose you have one folder where you keep a lot of your work files, for a project. I have a folder for my Windows 7 articles. I could access this folder by going to the Start menu, clicking on Computer, then my hard drive, locating the folder and then clicking on it. Windows 7 gives you an easier way. To set it up: click on the Start Menu, Computer, the hard drive, locate the

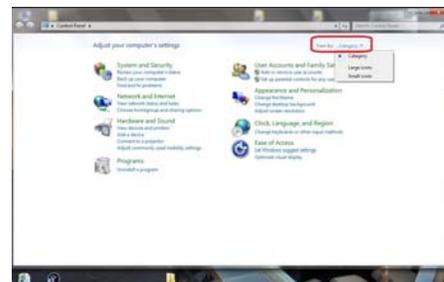
folder and left click on it and drag it to the Task Bar. When it reaches the Task Bar a pop-up message will say "Pin to Windows Explorer". Release the mouse button. If you didn't have it before, you'll see an icon that looks like this:



The next time I want to access the folder, all I have to do is right-click once on the folder on the Task Bar. Any other folders that you add to the Task Bar will also be located here under the heading of "Pinned" or "Frequent" (you determine which folders are "Pinned"). Of course, if this seems like too much work, you can always just create a shortcut to a folder on the desktop.

Before we leave the topic of the Start Menu and Task Bar, I should mention some changes to the Control Panel. If you left click on the Start Button and then click on Control Panel, you'll see something like this:

This is the control panel in the "Category" view.



A few of the utilities have been rearranged but it's pretty much like the one in Windows Vista and Windows XP. The Classic view is no longer available, its now called an "Icon" view. You can reach

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Discovering Windows 7 – Part 3

By Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, Washington
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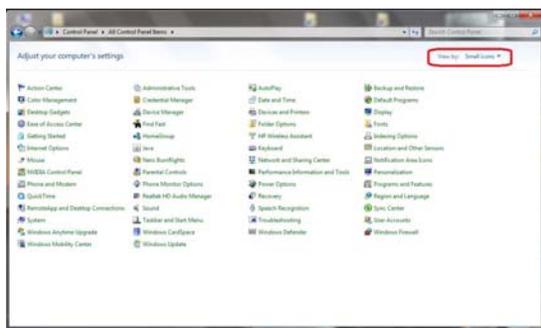
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I know many of you are in the process of Upgrading to Windows 7. As you've probably figured out, the more carefully you plan for this the easier it will be. It's also important to make a backup copy of your important files before you start the upgrade. After you've installed Windows 7, you'll want to verify that your hardware was automatically configured (i.e. printers, scanners, etc.) and install your favorite application programs. Remember, unless you are using the "Upgrade" installation method to migrate from Windows Vista to Windows 7 (or Laplink's PCMOVER program), you will need to reinstall your applications programs in Windows 7 to get the required program information into the Windows Registry.

(Continued from page 2)

it by going to the upper right corner of the window where it says "View by: Category" (circled in red) and clicking on "Category". In the pull down menu that appears you can select Large icons or Small icons. The result is the same, only the icon size is different.

As in the past, the Control Panel allows you to change many of the Windows settings. Color settings, Firewall, Date and Time, Power Options, and many more are available here. The list is extensive. Maybe we'll explore this at a later date. In addition, some add-on programs may appear on the Control Panel. In my case I have a CD/DVD burning program installed and an icon "Nero BurnRights" appears on the Control Panel list.



Want to get back to the Category view? Click on "View by: Small icons" (or Large icons) and select "Category". That's all there is to it.

With the effort it took to setup your computer and install any programs fresh in your memory, this might be an excellent time to think about backing up your system. A good backup can make recovery from a hard disk failure or a vicious virus infection a simple process that usually takes less than an hour instead of many hours or even days.

Before we talk about how to backup your system, we need to think about what media we will backup to. Logically, you won't want to store a system backup on drive C. If your hard drive were to crash or become infected your backup would be at risk.

In my opinion, an external hard disk drive that connects to your computer with a USB cable is the best place to backup your system. Currently (February 2010) you can find 320 Gigabytes to 1 terabyte (1000 Gigabytes !) external hard drives on sale for less than \$100. When selecting a hard drive, my advice is to go with a larger size rather than a smaller one. What seems adequate today will probably seem small in a year or two.

You should be able to backup your entire system several times on one of these drives and yet they are small enough that you can fit one in your pocket and take anywhere. You can also use one external drive on more than one computer.

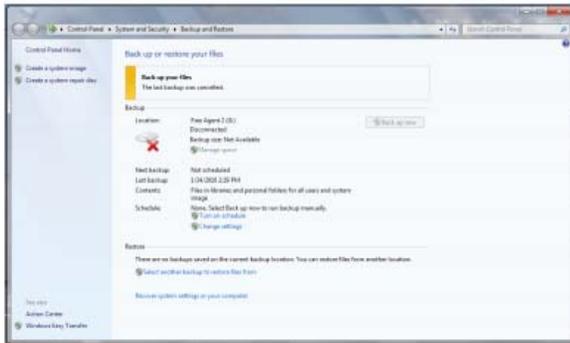
Alternately, most backup programs will allow you to save your information to CD or DVD disks. You almost certainly already have a CD/DVD drive installed in your computer (unless it's a mini-laptop like a net computer). Once the data is burned onto them, you can store the disks any place, including in another room, with a friend or even in a safe deposit box (where they will be safe from a home disaster). The problem with using these disks, even high capacity dual layer DVDs, is that it will take more than one disk to save all your system information. In other words, you have to be there for the entire process, to insert new blank disks as they are needed.

(Continued on page 4)

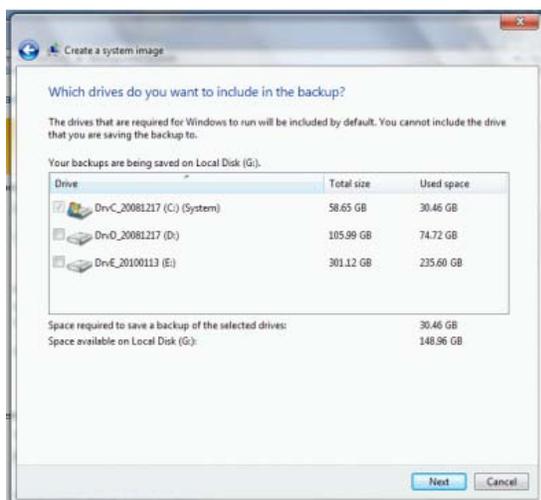
(Continued from page 3)

Now let's get to the process we are going use to backup our computer. Windows 7 Home Premium edition, unlike previous versions of Windows, comes with a complete backup program built into it. All you have to do is click on the "Start" button and type "backup" in the "Search box." Near the top of the list of options that appears you'll find "Backup and Restore." Click on it.

A window like this will appear. You can backup or restore your computer from this window. It also shows if you've made any backups and allows you to schedule automatic backups.



When you click on "Create a system image" your computer will search for drives where you can store your backup and ask you which drive you are going to use. After selecting your destination drive, you will see a window like the one below, where you can select which drives to backup. Once you've selected your source drive(s), you'll be taken to another window to start your backup. Assuming that you're using a destination drive large enough to hold your entire backup, you can go get a cup of coffee (or two) while the backup program runs to completion.



If this is the first time you've made a system backup, you will be asked to "Create a system repair disk." This is a CD which will enable you to boot your computer in the event of a hard drive failure that prevents you from starting your computer. Once the computer has started, using the repair CD, you'll be able to access your system image (created above) to automatically restore everything (including Windows, all your programs, files and settings) on your hard drive.

Once you have a total system backup, I recommend making additional total system backups at least once a month. This will keep your system backups up to date (you'd be amazed at the number of files you add or change (pictures, emails, etc.) in a month. This will give you extra backups in case one backup is defective for some reason.

The Windows 7 backup program also allows you to make quick backups of selected folders, such as your documents, music or pictures. This is a useful way to make backups of file areas that change between your scheduled full system backups.

PC World Magazine has an excellent video which describes the backup process at the web address:

http://www.pcworld.com/article/174184/how_to_automate_windows_7_backups.htm

Of course you don't have to use the Windows 7 Backup program. There are a number of excellent third party system backup programs, such as Acronis True Image, that work as well or even better. You can find them in stores or through Internet distributors. One advantage of a third part backup program is that you don't need to buy Windows 7 to get it. Plus, you can use these third party programs with other versions of Windows.

Post Script – Several days after writing this article the hard drive on my desktop PC started to malfunction. Fortunately, I had routinely made full system backups. It only took 15 minutes to physically replace the hard drive. Using my repair disk and the backup file which I had saved to an external hard drive, it took less than an hour to completely load Windows 7, all my programs, files and settings on the new hard drive and restored full operation to my computer.

Yes, hard drives do fail! Manufactures say they have a life of 5 to 10 years. Other factors, such as power surges, may cause early failure. Play it safe and make a backup!

Switching To A New Windows 7 Computer

By Rod Zumbro, OPCUG, October 2010

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When you decide to switch from an older computer to a new one—perhaps because you want either a faster computer or the new features that might come with a new system—you face the dreaded but inevitable tasks of transferring files from the old computer to the new computer and re-installing programs on the new computer. I recently switched from an older PC running Windows Vista to a new PC running Windows 7, and I've learned a few tricks that might help others.

Transferring Files

Windows 7 has a neat feature called “Windows Easy Transfer.” I tried it, and it worked without a hitch. The Windows Easy Transfer wizard for copying files and settings gives you three choices: (1) use an Easy Transfer cable; (2) use a network; or (3) use an external hard drive or USB flash drive. I decided to use a network since I had already temporarily connected both the old computer and new computer directly to my home network's router via separate Ethernet cables (so both computers could use the Internet connection). The wizard leads you through the process and lets you decide which folders and files should be transferred, then does the transfer and gives you a report on what has been transferred.

Dropbox

If you have only a relatively small amount of files (2 gigabytes or less), you could use a free program called Dropbo instead of Windows Easy Transfer ... although instead of a wizard leading you through the process, it's up to you to select the files and move them. Once you register online and install the program on both computers, you can put files that you want transferred to the new computer into the Dropbox on your old computer, and the program automatically transfers them to your online Dropbox via the Internet, after which they instantly appear in your Dropbox on the new computer. Even if you're not switching to a new computer, Dropbox is a useful tool for having secure information available to you online that you

can access from any computer anywhere by logging in to your Dropbox.

[NCTCUG Ed. Note:

Dropbox is also available as an app for various mobile devices.]



Re-Installing Programs

For programs that you installed on your old computer using a CD or DVD, you'll have to re-install them on your new computer. If you want to use older programs that might not work with a new operating system, a *PC World* article about running older software in Windows 7 is at http://www.pcworld.com/article/203820/older_software_in_windows_7.html?tk=nl_wvx_h_cbstories#_blank – or -- <http://tinyurl.com/2ewvl4> [that's an ell not a one!]

An interesting option with Windows 7 Professional and Ultimate versions (to which you could upgrade) is a “Virtual PC” that you can install; it uses Windows XP as its operating system, so older programs that work with XP will work in the Virtual PC mode. I tried that for an older application, and it does work.

Some of your programs may not have been originally installed from CD or DVD but instead, you may have downloaded them from the Web. I discovered a Web application called Ninite Easy PC Setu that gives you a downloadable installer to install several of your desired applications in one fell swoop. It's free, with no sign-up required. Not all applications are covered, of course, but Ninite does include a good number of choices in various categories such as browsers (Chrome, Firefox, Opera, Safari); messaging/email (Skype, Thunderbird...); media (iTunes, Hulu, VLC Media Player...); imaging (Paint.Net, Picasa...); documents (OpenOffice, Adobe Reader...); security (AVG Anti-Virus, Ad-Aware, Spybot...); runtimes (Flash, Java...); other (Dropbox, Google Earth...); and utilities (CCleaner, Revo Uninstaller...). It's a fast way of installing programs all at once.

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Music—Capture it, Organize it and Enjoy it – Part 2

By Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida August 2010 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor
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Last month we discussed the History of digital music and how it is created. Now it's time to organize that Music and create a Music Folder so that it can be the repository of all the music you Rip, purchase, or convert from analog sources; basically your Music Library. There are many ways of organizing the Music folder with sub folders. Before we do that it is

probably worth a review of the data that is kept with each music file to see if it can be of any use in determining the organization of these folders. What data? you say. Well along with the actual music, in each music file, there is data that describes the music part of the file. This type of data is called metadata.

So, metadata is data that describes other data (in this case the music). The music metadata is called ID3 Tag Data and is defined by the ID3v2 specification. ID3 Tag Data includes descriptive items such as: title, artist, album, track number, genre, year, copyright, stereo, length, composer, rating, etc., as well as album cover art graphics. ID3 Tag Data is created when the original MP3 data file is created. The ID3 Tag Data is not easily modified unless you use an ID3 Tag Editor like MP3Tag, which was discussed in the March 2010 issue of the Monitor. (In short, MP3Tag allows the user to modify the ID3 Tag Data that is created along with the MP3 file when a tune is initially created, or ripped from a CD.)

The reason that ID3 Tag Data is important is because Music players, like Windows Media Player (WMP) and iTunes use the ID3 Tag Data to organize and present your music library. A music tune will show up according to the ID3 Tag Data, which may not be where you think it should show up if you are only looking at the file name. This will probably not be a problem if all of your tunes come from CDs or are downloaded, but if you convert any from vinyl or tape to MP3, the ID3 Tag Data may not be what you think it should be. Also, if you want to change where particular artists show up,

you might have to change the ID3 Tag Data for that artist. Some CD compilations of tunes have the artist as "Various Artists", which will put that tune under "V", probably not where you would expect to find it. So, it's good to have an ID3 Tag Editor so you can make any changes to the ID Tag Data to put the tunes in the places you want them.

Once the tunes that need changes to the ID3 Tag Data are changed, the library will be presented as you expected, typically artists or songs alphabetically arranged, although, you can also view the library based on other items such as Genre, Album, Year, or even Rating. Rating is a number that you give to a tune, typically one to five. The Rating can then help you find a tune or present a specific view of your music library. (For example, you could show all the tunes with a rating of 4 or better.)

So the ID3 Tag Data determines how the music library will be presented, but we still may want to organize the under-lying folders for convenience. This is not necessary, but it might allow the music to be viewed easily (using Windows Explorer), without using a Music Player. When CDs are Ripped, they are put into folders for the Artist, with the Album being a sub-folder. You might continue this and just put all the Artist folders into a Music folder. Then, it would be easy to find any tune with just the Artist and Album names. This is in general a very good way to organize your Music Folder. The only difficulties that might arise are those associated with converted tapes and disks, but you will just have to see how best they can each fit into your overall scheme.

A simpler, but less desirable scheme might be just one Music Folder with every tune included. The tunes would then be alphabetically arranged by the file name. This can lead to one very big file, but for small Music Libraries, this may be



acceptable. You could even create separate music Folders for specific music genres, like Music-Big Band, Music-Country, Music-Pop; it's really your choice.

Playlists are next. Now that we have a Folder organization for our Music Folder, we can take advantage of that organization to find tunes to include in Playlists. Playlists are just as you would expect, they are lists of tunes to Play, without any manual intervention. Playlists can include as many tunes as you would like, only limited by the number of tunes in your library. You could easily create a playlist that would last all day.

Playlist files are another file type. The original playlist file type is M3U. WMP can be set to use M3U but prefers another Microsoft file type, WPL. M3U has a very simple file structure which is just a text list of files. WPL is a little more complex and probably a little more capable and written in HTML. Both work fine and it is impossible to tell which is being used without looking at the file types. If you have no reason to prefer one over the other, use your Music Player's default type. (Either file can be modified using Notepad, not Wordpad or Word, if necessary. Notepad is a simple text editor that does not include any formatting information.) This should not be undertaken lightly.

Modifying a file with a text editor should only be done with great caution, and only by a person who is confident of the file structure. An error in the file structure may make the file non-useable, so do this only if absolutely necessary. Once you have decided on the Playlist file type, or just accepted to use the default, you can start to create Playlists. Just think of a theme and then find all the tunes that support that theme.

Using WMP, playlists are easily created by showing the Library in any view, such as by Artist, and then dragging-and-dropping the tunes for the Playlist over to the Playlist pane on the right side of the screen. After you have all the tunes in the list, give it a name and save it and that's all there is to it.

While you're at it you might want to create a Playlist for each Artist so that you can review all of the tunes for that specific artist. In this case, the artist is the theme. You might even like this playlist for "an evening with a Sinatra, or Elvis, or the Beatles".

Now you're ready to take advantage of all that music entertainment, laboriously stored in the Music Folders.

One last item to consider is using your music on other machines on your network. If you don't have a home network now, you probably will in the future. For simplicity and convenience it makes sense to have only one Music Folder, kept on your main computer (acting as a Music Server), and to use it on every other machine on your network. This way there is only one Music Folder to be backed-up.

WMP can easily be set up for Sharing Media. Select Tools-Library-Configure Sharing..., and check the Share Media check box. Then choose the devices, on the network, to Allow sharing of music. This will allow other machines to use the media in the Server's Music Library.

By the way, all of the music in your Music Library can also be used on any of the portable MP3 music players, like Apple's iPod or SanDisk's Clip. WMP provides the ability to "Sync" your music to a portable device. Briefly, to share a Playlist, plug your device into a USB port and choose Sync on the Selection Bar, choose the playlist and select Sync. (Obviously, the memory in the portable device must be large enough to hold all the tuned in the playlist.)

Recorded music is only about 133 years old if we consider Edison's invention in 1877 as its practical beginning. (There were earlier patents on devices that could record but not playback the recording.) Recorded music has come a long way from Edison's time to the present when almost any recorded music can be obtained and stored indefinitely on our personal computers, and then played and shared almost effortlessly.

The computer, besides all of its other jobs, can be a great music entertainment center. If you haven't started yet, what are you waiting for? Get started creating your own Music Library so you and your family can enjoy the fruits of the past 133 years and your current efforts.



This and That or Things that May Interest You — Windows Tips

By Lynn Page, Editor Crystal River Users Group, Florida
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Windows 7

Shake

Minimize all windows but one—shake, click and hold down on the title bar and shake to maximize that window and minimize all others. Shake again to restore all.

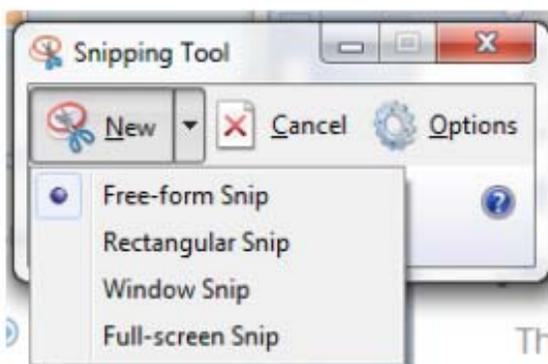
Snap

Snap can display two windows side by side with each filling half of the screen. With one window active press and hold the Windows key while hitting the left or right arrow key. The window snaps to that side. Do the same with the other window but press the other arrow key while holding the Windows key down.

To maximize a window with press and hold down the Windows key while hitting the up arrow key. To restore the window hold the Windows key and hit the down arrow button.

Snipping Tool

The snipping tool has been improved in Windows 7. You can snip a whole window, a rectangular section of the screen, or draw a freehand outline with your mouse or tablet pen. You can save it as a graphic file or annotate with basic drawing tools. And you no longer have the red snipping border.



Windows Mail

Windows Mail can handle a variety of different accounts. So you can set up a single personal email account, or add a work or other personal accounts and even newsgroups. With multiple accounts I like to put each account in a separate folder.

Add a User Account

In Windows Mail click Accounts in the Tools drop down menu. Click the Add button select the type of account to add, click Next, and then follow the instructions inputting the logon and server information for the email account.

Delete a User Account

In Windows Mail click Accounts in the Tools drop down menu. Select the account to remove and then click Remove.

Blocked Email Attachments

To protect your computer from file attachments that are commonly used to spread email viruses Windows Mail blocks certain types of files, like: .exe, .pif, and .scr files. When Windows Mail blocks an attachment, the Information bar displays a message notifying you and listing the attachment that was blocked.



To access blocked attachments close the message with the attachment. Then in the Tools drop down menu select Options. Click the Security tab and clear the Do not allow Attachments to be saved or opened that could potentially be a virus check box. Next reopen the message. Once you access the attachment it is better to repeat the process and block the attachments again.

Junk Mail Folder

Windows Mail's junk email filter is designed to catch obvious spam and move them to the Junk e-mail folder. helps manage your Inbox to keep it free of unwanted email.

Change the Junk Email Protection Level

In the Tools drop down menu click Junk e-mail Options and set the protection level you want:

Move a Message from the Junk Email Folder to the Inbox: Open the Junk email folder and select the message to move to the Inbox. In the toolbar point to Junk email and click Mark as Not Junk in the drop down menu. The message is moved to your Inbox.

Add Sender To the Blocked Senders List

Select a message from the sender to add to the Blocked Senders list. On the toolbar point to Junk email and then click Add Sender to Blocked Senders List. This blocks all future messages from that specific sender.

Add Sender To the Safe Senders List

Select a message from the sender to add to the Safe Senders list. On the toolbar point to Junk email, and then click Add Sender to Safe Senders List. This allows all future messages from that specific sender.

Correct File Associations

If files are opening in the wrong application find one of the files and right click it. Then in Windows Vista, select Open With and then Choose Default Program. From the list of programs select the program to use. Or Browse to add a program to the list. Click to check the Always use the selected program to open this kind of file box and then click OK. In Windows XP, after right clicking the file select Open With. Then find the program to use. or Browse to find another program. Again, check Always use the selected program to open this kind of file and click OK.

Remove Your Phone Number From Searches

Google

Search to find your listing in Google's PhoneBook. Then go to Google's online PhoneBook Name Removal form and enter the information as it appeared in the Google listing.

WhitePages.com

Find your listing on WhitePages.com. and at the bottom of your listing click the small link that for "Is this you? Remove your listing." Confirm the remove request.

Yahoo

Find your listing using Yahoo!'s People Search. Then use the online Remove Phone Listing form and enter your name as it appears in the listing.

Switchboard.com

Find your listing by searching Switchboard. Click the Remove this listing link beside the listing and provide your email address.

Office 2007

Format Painter

The Format Painter is an easy way to copy formatting you want to duplicate on other text. Select the text to copy the format from, click the Format Painter button and then select the text to format. To apply the same formatting to more than one item, select the text with the formatting, double-click Format Painter, and then select each word, phrase, or paragraph you want to apply formatting to. When finished, click the Format Painter again or press ESC. Format Painter is available in most Office programs.

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Washington Area User Group Partners

Working Together For Our Members

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Wiping Your Hard Drive(s)

Here's something to consider if you plan to donate your old PC to an organization that re-cycles computers or give it to a friend or family member: to protect any sensitive, private personal or financial information on the PC, you should wipe clean your hard drive(s) first. Note that you cannot just reformat the hard drive and expect your data to be gone forever and unretrievable, because there are ways to recover data even after a disc has been reformatted. Fortunately, there's a popular, respected free program called Darik's Burn and Nuke ("DBA") that does the job. You download and burn it to a CD, then use the CD to boot your old computer (put the CD into your primary CD/DVD drive, and it should load automatically when you turn on the PC). I used DBAN to wipe clean the two 500 GB hard drives in my old PC, using the "medium security" DoD Short Method of three passes, the default method. It only took 12 and a half hours, but who's counting?

After wiping clean your hard drive(s), you can safely donate the PC. Or, if you're giving the old computer to a friend or family member, you may want to first install Windows from the install disc for the Windows operating system that came with the PC.

Rod Zumbro, a retired Navy Supply Corps captain, is the creator and editor of a weekly html email newsletter sent to more than 900 members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Rod designed OLLI's Web site and helps maintain it.

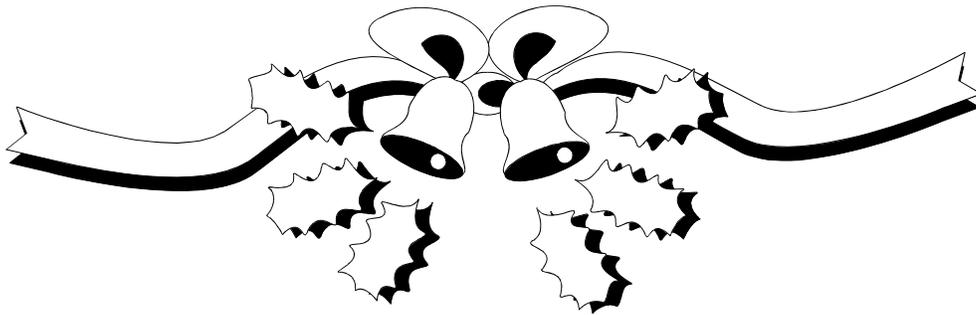
(Continued from page 11)

10. Be smart; know what services run on your computer, and what ports are open.
11. Stay away from peer-to-peer sharing software programs.
12. Think! Computer Security is about what you do as well as what you don't do.
13. If your computer has a Trojan or worm, you can try to fix it BUT it probably has more than one Trojan or worm. It's better to rebuild if you want to be truly secure.
14. Wipe out the hard drive when disposing of computers with utilities such as Active KillDisk (Free) WipeDisk, or BCwipe.
15. Think before you click.

If You Are A Victim

1. Contact all of your banking, credit card, mortgage, etc., companies.
2. Contact the police.
3. Report it to the Federal Trade Commission.
4. Prepare an ID Theft Affidavit and Fraudulent Account Statement.

To learn more about identity theft you can go to <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/index.htm>



Happy Holidays!

Arming Yourself Against Identity Theft

Jay Ferron, CEH, CISM, CISSP, CSWP, MCITP, MVP, Security Practice Lead - Global Knowledge

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Identity theft is a very fast-growing problem, and you can become a victim if you're not careful. According to Privacy Rights Clearinghouse (<http://www.privacyrights.org>), compromised personal information collected during data breaches includes Social Security numbers, account numbers, and driver's license numbers, all of which are useful to identity thieves. Since January 2005, 356,088,361 records containing sensitive personal information have been involved in security breaches in the U.S. This does not include incidents where identity theft was not reported.

What is identity theft? Simply put, it occurs when some else says that he or she is you and uses your credit and identity to commit crimes. The consequences can include ruining your credit or worse. And if your identity is stolen, it can take a long time to fix the issues that it will cause.

How does one become a victim of Identity Theft? Most of the time, people give the thieves the necessary information. For example, have you ever gotten an e-mail that says, "You won a 42-inch TV!" or "You won the lottery!" Have you ever received email from an overseas country stating that someone died and left \$300,000,000, and all you need to do to get 69% of the money is..? You might get an e-mail saying "There is an issue with your account, please login with your user name and password. Do yourself a favor; do not answer and put the mail in the deleted folder.

You also can become a victim by downloading malware or spyware. According to Wikipedia, "malware, short for malicious software, is software designed to infiltrate a computer system without the owner's informed consent."

On the Microsoft website (<http://www.microsoft.com/security/spyware/whatis.asp>), spyware is defined as "a general term used to identity software that performs certain behaviors, generally without appropriately obtaining your consent first, such as: advertising, collect-

ing personal information, or changing the configuration of your computer. Spyware is often associated with software that displays advertisements (called adware) or software that tracks personal or sensitive information."

Malware and spyware can be downloaded to your computer in any number of ways. They can get in through down-loading games or music from the Web, peer-to-peer sharing networks, some screensavers, and some "Free software."

What are the criminals looking for? Information such as Social Security numbers, passwords, your mother's maiden name, your birth date, billing and e-mail addresses, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, and ATM pins. The more information you give them, the easier it is to steal your identity.

Simple steps to prevent becoming a victim

1. Think security. If you are not sure about something, do not open or install it.
2. If asked to download a file, and you are not sure what it does, do not download it.
3. Get an anti-spyware program, keep it updated, and use it.
4. Do not open e-mails from people you do not know.
5. Do not open attachments if you are not positive you know what they are.
6. If an e-mail offers something too good to be true, it probably is a scam.
7. Use anti-virus software; update it at least once a day or more.
8. Patch your computer's operating system (all vendors have updates).
9. Patch your applications (word, games, mail programs, etc.).

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Movie Making — At Home For Fun (Not Really For Profit)

by Phil Sorrentino – Sarasota PC Users Group www.spcug.org

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Movie making has become possible for anyone who has a digital camera, a reasonably capable computer, and lots and lots of time, with an emphasis on the time. I'm not talking about full feature length movies that could be shown in your local movie theater, but rather movies that document an occasion or activity, using pictures, videos and music. Just look at YouTube to see how many movies (videos) are available for all sorts of reasons like entertainment, education, and "how to (accomplish something)". YouTube makes finding and watching movies possible. Movie Maker and your digital camera make creating movies possible.

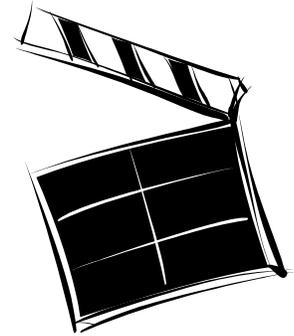
I am using Movie Maker as an example because everyone who has the Windows Operating System, from XP on to Windows 7, has a version available to them, at no extra cost. Many other applications can accomplish the same task. Some have many more features and some are more sophisticated, but usually at a price, starting around \$60. Among these applications are Corel Video Studio Pro, Adobe Presentation Elements, Photodex Proshow Gold, Pinnacle Studio, Sony Vegas Movie Studio, and CyberLink Power Director. There are even some free applications available for download, like Video Spin, Avid FreeDV, and Wax, none of which I have tried.

Movie Maker and most of the other applications mentioned above provide all the basic tools for assembling and organizing your pictures, videos and music into a movie. The movie can be composed of pictures only, videos only, pictures and videos, or more typically pictures, videos and music together. The formats of the pictures, videos and music must be those that Movie Maker accepts. (There are some small differences between versions for XP, Vista, and Windows 7.)

Pictures must



be .jpg, .bmp, or .gif. Videos must be .avi or .wmv (Windows 7 will also accept .mov). Music must be .mp3, .wav, or .wma.



The pictures and videos are usually put into a time sequence, or timeline, and then the music is added as one or multiple audio tracks. (Movie Maker supports only one audio track, which can be used for music or voice-over. You may be able to play some tricks to implement two tracks, but if you need more than one audio track you would be better off using one of the other applications that easily support multiple audio tracks.) The audio track can then be added to the picture and video timeline. Music or voice-over can be intermixed as components of the total audio track. Integrating voice-overs and music, while timing the voice-over with the picture sequence can sometimes become a real challenge, but it is usually worth the effort.

Here are some basic steps for producing a movie with Movie Maker. Gather all the pictures and videos you need for the movie. Bring along more than you think you might need because it is very easy to eliminate pictures and videos if you have too many for your desired audience.

Actually, it is good to have the desired audience and a target time in mind before you start to create the movie. Not everyone might want to see 65 minutes of your California Vacation, though some close friends might make an effort to stay awake. Brevity is sometimes the best policy, but that is up to you, the director. So, for some movies you might target only 10 or 15 minutes, while some others maybe 30 or 40 minutes, where you know your audience wants to savor every last detail.

Given that you have a target time in mind and you have more than enough pictures and videos to fill that time, (and probably a little more), and some music identified to go along with the pictures, fire up Movie Maker. Different versions of Music Maker will look different because of the Operating System that it is

built for, but all will provide the basic movie making functionality.

All Movie Maker home screens will provide a set of tools or tasks, a collection area where you can add pictures, videos, and music, a preview area, and a timeline. There are many ways you can approach the general task of making a movie. You, as director, can certainly approach this in any way that makes the most sense to you. After creating a few movies, I have settled on the following sequence of events.

The first activity to accomplish is to add all your pictures to the collection area. It is probably best if you have copied all the pictures, videos, and music into one folder for use with Movie Maker, making things easy to find. Next is to move the pictures on to the timeline. If your pictures are in the proper sequence for your movie, you are done with the pictures, but that is not typically the case, so drag-and-drop the pictures around the timeline so that the sequence tells the story that you want told.

Once the pictures are in the proper sequence, go back to your source folder and get the videos. Place the videos in the sequence of pictures so that they support the story being told by the picture sequence. I have found that short videos, maybe around 15 seconds have a good impact, but sometimes a very long video is necessary. Once the videos have been sprinkled around the movie, it is time to see if you are approaching your target time.

I know this is a hard thing to do, but if you are above your time by a lot (maybe 10% or more), it is time to pare back some of the pictures or videos, (or change your target time). Once you have the sequence of pictures and videos that tell the story, it is time to add effects and transitions. Effects are animations that can be added to pictures (and videos, although sometimes effects on top of videos are distracting, but that is a judgment call, to be made by you, the director). Effects basically add motion to still pictures, almost like turning a picture into a short video. These effects are sometimes called “Ken Burns Effects”, named after the person who made them popular.

Transitions are the way one picture morphs into the next, maybe a page turn, or a wipe, or a dissolve. Transitions can be added to both pictures and videos. Use the fancy transitions sparingly; they can be very distracting if over used. Every once in a while, preview the movie or at least sections of it to guarantee that the transitions and effects are adding to the story,

rather than adding distractions; again, it’s your call.

Now it’s time for the music. Add the music to the collection and then add it to the timeline to go along with the sequence of pictures and videos. The music should help tell the story and add to the overall multimedia experience. Try not to use music that distracts from the story being told by the pictures and videos. Music should probably go from beginning to end, so you may need a few music selections, depending on the length of the music selections and the length of the movie.

Typically, music selections are about 3 to 4 minutes long, so for a 15 minute movie, you might need from 4 to 6 selections for the complete movie. (Voice-overs can be any length you so desire.) Now that you see the process and some of the details, if you feel that you don’t have enough control over the process or would like some other features, you might make a note to look into one of the more capable movie creating applications when you get a chance.

The last thing in creating the movie is to add a title, although many directors might do this first, and a credits frame at the end. The title introduces the movie, and the credits give credit to whomever you feel should be mentioned or thanked, like the cameramen, participants, and a mention of the music if it is copy-righted music.

The really last thing is to Publish your movie. Publish it to a .wmv file and review it. If it is not just perfect, make the appropriate changes and re-publish it to a .wmv file. Once it is just what you want, and you have Vista or Windows 7, publish it to DVD, which will create a DVD that will play on any living room DVD player.

When that is finished, invite the audience, pop the popcorn, distribute the drinks and lean back and enjoy the applause.



NCTCUG Annual Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2010

By Paul Howard, Treasurer, NCTCUG

NCTCUG's fiscal year concluded on September 30th. With a positive cash flow of \$641.49, the group is in excellent financial condition.

Although our membership has declined over the years, NCTCUG is financially sound because of prudent planning and continued fiscal restraint. Membership stands at 52. Our "rainy day fund" was established many years ago, and has grown to four CD accounts held for future needs.

Member generosity accounts for forty-eight percent of our income. Donations, either directly as contributions made with dues payments, or through donations at Pizza SIG, are vital for the fiscal soundness of the group.

Member donations were received this year from: Fishbein, Freeborne, Housley, Howard, Keys, Korbeck, Johnson, Leggett, Mikosinski, Pafford, Schmidt, Throneburg, Treadway, Walsh, Wenri, and Willard.

Pizza SIGs were sponsored by Jim Brueggeman and Paul Howard. Pizza SIG donors include Brueggeman, Fraser, Fujii, Garson, Goldberg, Howard, Keys, Mabudian, Mikosinski, Phillips, Schmidt, Walsh and Wenri.

A restricted reserve fund is established within one of our CD accounts for the eventual replacement of the jointly owned computer projector, shared with our user group partner, WACUG. We also have a 1/3 ownership share in several pieces of audio equipment with our partner user groups, WACUG and OPCUG.

Our account balances at the close of the fiscal year (September 30th) were: Checking Account \$3530.94 (reconciled within Quicken). CD accounts: Restricted - \$801.36; Unrestricted - \$4222.80. NCTCUG maintains a checking balance of at least \$1000.00 to avoid bank service charges.

This Annual Treasurer's Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2010 has been approved by the Board of Directors of NCTCUG. The account balances noted above are based on in-person queries of our bank – statements for all accounts as of the 9/30/2010 close of the fiscal year have not yet been received. On that basis, the balances and the Cash Flow Report below are hereby certified as correct.

Paul Howard, Treasurer
James Rhodes, President

The "organizational documents" area of our web site contains additional information about the user group's financial operations, including prior years' Financial Reports for comparison purposes.

Cash Flow Report	
FY '10: 10/1/09 - 9/30/10	
Revenues	
Pizza SIG Cash Donations	823.00
Donations by Check	550.00
Total Donations	1373.00
Membership Dues	1450.00
Interest Income	10.60
Total Revenues	\$2,833.60
Expenses	
Insurance - Liability & Personal Prop.	325.00
Legal - VA Corporation Fees	25.00
APCUG Membership Dues	50.00
Administrative Postage	8.80
Total Administrative	408.80
DSL Service, equip. & installation costs	644.85
Audio Equipment for Webinars (Jnt Ownr)	191.00
Meetings & Other Svcs	835.85
Newsletter Postage	244.00
Newsletter Printing	703.36
Total Newsletter	947.36
Total Expenses	\$2,192.01
Results from Operations	\$641.59
Prepared 10/19/2010 Ver B	

(Continued from page 9)

Create A Theme From A Document

Themes are a valuable asset in Word and other Office files. A theme is a combination of theme colors, theme fonts, and theme effects. When you have generated a document with just the perfect formatting you may want to use it again. So save the formatting as a custom theme. With the document open on the Page Layout tab, in the Themes group, click Themes. At the bottom of the menu, click Save Current Theme. Provide a file name and click save.

Use A Theme From Another Document

If you didn't create a theme from a document you can still use it as a theme for a new document. Open the document that you want to apply a different theme to and on the Page Layout tab, in the Themes group, click Themes. At the bottom of the menu, click Browse for Themes. In the Choose Theme or Themed Document dialog box, select the 2007 Office document that contains the theme to apply, and click Open.

Washington Area Computer User Group

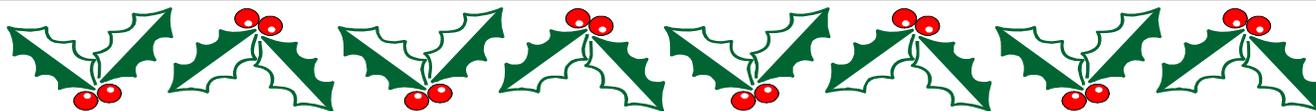
WACUG Meetings will be held on Nov. 20 & Dec. 11, 2010 & Jan. 22, 2011 from 12:30 to 3:30 pm. WACUG will hold joint meetings with OPCUG [www.olligmu.org/~opcug/] It is anticipated that all meetings, except June, July, and August, will be held at the **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute** [www.oli.gmu.edu/] at George Mason University, 4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax, VA, known as the Tallwood Campus.

Topics

November 20 Utility Programs
 December 11th Part 1: Fundamental Technologies
 Part 2: PC Clinic
 January 22nd Gene Barlow (Live, in person):
 Organizing Your Hard Drive & The Best Backup
 Plan to Protect your System from Failure

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/>



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

President	Jim Rhodes	703-931-7854
1st VP	Ron Schmidt	301-577-7899
Treasurer	Paul Howard	703-860-9246
Secretary	Bill Walsh	703-241-8141

Directors — all terms expire 2011

Mel Mikosinski	703-978-9158
John Keys	703-451-0896
Nick Wenri	703-759-3938
Sy Fishbein	703-536-5894
Roger Fujii	
Lorin Garson	



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 nctcugj@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

Members' advertisements: Ads are accepted from members for non-commercial purposes at no charge. Copy should be sent to the Editor in the same format as article submissions. Commercial Advertisements: Ads are accepted from commercial advertisers at the rate of \$40 per full page, per appearance, with discounts for multiple insertions. Smaller ads are priced accordingly. Payment for ads must be made in advance of appearance. Advertisers must supply a permanent address and telephone number to the editor.

Reprint Policy

Permission to reprint articles from the NCTCUG Journal is given to school, personal computer club, and nonprofit organization publications, provided that: (a) NCTCUG Inc. receives a copy of the publication; (b) credit is given to the NCTCUG Journal as the source; (c) the original author is given full credit; and (d) the article author has not expressly copyrighted the article. Recognition is one means of compensating our valued contributors

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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!

(Continued from page 1)

“For group video calls with three people, you’ll need a minimum connection of 512 kbit/s downlink and a 1 GHz processor computer (minimum) or Core 2 Duo 1.8 GHz (recommended).

For best quality, we recommend you add five people or fewer. Everyone on the call will need a broadband internet connection of 1024 kbit/s downlink or more and computers with a Core 2 Duo 2 GHz processor (minimum) or Intel i7 (recommended).”

So, if you were looking for a reason, now’s the time to upgrade your DSL connection, and / or “invest” in yet another new computer <grin>! Hope you’ll check things out on the 2nd Wednesday of the month:
<http://www.nctcug.org/webinarsig.htm>

December 2010/January 2011

1st Wed. (12/1, 1/5)
7 p.m. General Meeting

2nd Wed. (12/8, 1/12)
Online-Only Webinar using Skype

4th Wed (12/22, 1/26)
7 p.m. Internet SIG

3rd Monday (1/17; none in December)
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.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

First Class

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

