TOGGLE

THE MICROCOMPUTER TURN (ON)

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PROGRAM

At the March 2010 Meeting
of the
Tacoma Open Group
for Microcomputers

Dave Rowe
will give a presentation entitled

Setting Up a Wireless Router
- Just the Basics

UPDATE

Beginners

In *E-Mail Scams* Vinnie LaBash talks about email scams you should be aware of and how to defeat them.

Communications

In *Netiquette Notes - Promote Respect* Hank Pearson provides some common sense rules for forwarding your friends' e-mails without displaying *their* e-mail addresses and thus opening them up to unwanted spam and worse.

In *Editing Email Source Code* author Pearson lays out some notes on how to clean up e-mails before forwarding them. Perhaps a bit overdone.

In *What Are RSS Feeds?* the author describes this family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works--such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, video--in a standardized format.

In *Panda Cloud Antivirus Released* the author Ira Whilsker describes a new concept in anti virus software. What is new, apparently, is that you do not need to update the virus database on *your* computer to mainatin protection. They maintain the database on their central computers and check your computer's signature against that database--and presumably delete it from your machine. Check it out.

In *Sandy's Tip of the Week - Google Searches* Sandy Berger suggests a couple of ways to find your way back to the original page when you are directed to multiple pages in an Internet search. If you don't understand what we just said read the article. It's short.

Word Processing

In *Using WORD 2007 and OFFICE 2007 Sometimes May Cause a Problem* the author suggests two alternatives. 1. If using WORD2003 or earlier install a compatibility pack available from Microsoft, or 2. Ask the WORD 2007 user to save the file as a Word 97-2003 format document. That is one of his options.

Operating System

In *Repairung File Registry Permissions May Solve Setup Problems* the author discovered that he couldn't install a program due to registry permissions. What does that mean? Read the article and find out.

Hardware

In *Remapping Your Keyboard* the author suggests that if cleaning or replacement of the keyboard don't fix the situation there is a keyboard re-mapping program that you might use.

In *Power to the Pixels* the author suggests that price and pixel count are not the only criteria to consider when buying a digital camera. He outlines other considerations.

General Interest

In *Microsoft Scanner & Camera Wizard* the author briefly mentions a built-in capability of Windows XP and Vista to handle your digital picturesif you do not have specific software loaded to do that job.

BEGINNER'S NOTES & TIPS

Email Scams

by Vinny La Bash, <vlabash@comcast.net>
Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.

There are at least two dozen people in Nigeria that want to give me twelve million dollars. Imagine that! People are vigorously competing with each other to make me rich. You would think that after all the publicity over the last dozen years everyone would know about the Nigerian scam. Headhunters in New Guinea know about the Nigerian scheme. Lost tribes in the Amazon know about the Nigerian scheme. So why do the scammers keep doing it? Because people keep falling for it. Some folks want to believe, and nothing will stop them no matter what evidence sits in front of them.

Email scams like the one that keeps flowing out of Nigeria can be downright dangerous. Not only have people been scammed out of money, but in a few instances have actually lost their lives. That is a high price to pay for credulity.

Most unsolicited commercial messages (SPAM) may be annoying, but they do little more than eat up some bandwidth. The originators don't want to harm you, just entice you to buy something. It's sometimes called online advertising.

As the Internet evolves, so do the scammers. They have become more sophisticated at attempting to trick us out of our money, hand over personal information, reveal passwords, frighten us or make us believe in something that isn't true.

For example, our current polarized political system has generated distrust of government in some places. A band of swindlers has used these sentiments to construct an email that ''warns'' you that the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI believe that you are involved in either money laundering activities or somehow complicit in terrorist activity. Information like that, even if false, can make people uneasy.

Fortunately, the scammers have a solution. For the small sum of $370 the Economic Financial Crimes Commission Chairman will send documentation certifying you as a proper upstanding citizen, thereby avoiding a messy prosecution and jail time. How could anyone pass that up? These government agencies must be terribly busy, and isn't it a great comfort to know that they can resolve important matters by email if you're willing to send them only a few hundred dollars?

Congratulations! You've won the lottery! There are many variations to this theme, but they all involve filling out a form before you can claim your prize. Don't forget to include your social security number since they need to inform the IRS. What makes this scam so devious is that legitimate lotteries really do need this information. One thing that should puzzle you is how could you possibly win a lottery you haven't entered?

Suppose you really did enter the contest or bought a lottery ticket, what then? Legitimate enterprises are aware of these scams and will almost always provide you with an alternate way of supplying the information. In other words, never be careless with personal information.

You receive an email informing you of a ''problem'' with your bank account. Strange, you don't recall doing business with the bank. All you have to do to resolve the ''problem'' is click on the provided link and supply information that the bank already knows if you are a customer.

Tens of thousands of people receive these messages. A few may actually be customers of the bank. Some believing the email is real, click on the link, and are taken to a bogus site. Any information provided won't be used to resolve any ''problems'', but instead be used to clean out your bank account.

There are so many scams out there perpetrated by email it makes you want to give up in disgust. That would be understandable if there were no way to protect yourself, but many people forget the obvious: **Use Common Sense**.

When you get an email that asks you to be part of a plot to move large amounts of money offshore to your bank account by doing business with people you don't know from a foreign country thousand of miles away, shouldn't that arouse your suspicions?

Any text message that turns out to be an image should be suspect. The only purpose for turning text into images is to defeat spam filters. Be on your guard.

The bad guys are very creative and always seem to be one step ahead of everyone else. The FBI provides a service for citizens to receive the latest information about online scams. For more information on e-scams, please visit the FBI's New E-Scams and Warnings webpage at <***www.fbi.gov/cyberinvest/escams.htm***>. Visit the site at least once a month to be aware of new and exciting ways scammers have to separate you from your money.

COMMUNICATIONS NOTES & TIPS

Netiquette Notes - Promote Respect

by Hank Pearson, Arizona Socierty for Computer Informatio,n Inc. (ASCII)

How Did They get My Email Address?

Someone I don't know wrote to a friend, "How did they get my email address?" The friend forwarded the message to me, complete with email addresses. So now I have another email address, but of course my friend trusts me.

When you forward jokes and stories to your friends, you trust them. They wouldn't misuse your email address. They forward the messge to their trusted friends. And those people forward it to their friends. If nobody cleans up the message, the list of names and addresses grows to hundreds.

Lists are Worth Money

It might be hard to believe, but some people deal in email addresses, Ka-ching.

Once I recieved a tip that it is not a good idea to have your contact information printed on your personal checks. So when I ordered new checks, I made them as plain as possible. And suddenly I started recieving hundreds of new spam messages. I examined the fine print on the check printer's website, and sure enough, the company disclosed that it sells your email address. How ironic that trying to limit identity exposure resulted in more spam.

A well-known charity used to send their email to volunteers, showing the names and addresses to every recipient. One of the volunteers saw the commercial potential, and sent his business ads to the whole list. That is not what the list is for. So they changed their procedures (not soon enough).

Respect Your Friends

There are many ways spammers harvest email addresses. You'll get some spam no matter how careful you are, but it doesn't hurt to be careful. And at the same time, respect your friends' privacy. You do not need to share their addresses. Let them decide who to share their information with. It belongs to them. You would not steal from your friends. So don't share their identity.

Clean Up Messages

When you send email to several people, do they see the lists of names and addresses? Not good, even if They already know all the addresses (if the message is likely to be forwarded). Clean up the message before forwarding it. Delete the names and addresses.

Use BCC

Then, instead instead of sending the message **To** your friends, use BCC (Blind Carbon Copy). That way they will get the content, but not the list of people. Just send the message **To** yourself, and **BCC** everyone else.

Netiquette Note

There is one more vital step. To educate and remind your friends, at the top or bottom of messages that will likely be forwarded, include a **netiquette note:**

–
If you forward this message
- delete contacts and email addresses
- use BCC (Blind Carbon Copy)
Respect and protect your friends
–

Kind Reminders

Remember though, even when you hide your friends' identities. your name and address are out there for them to forward to their friends. So if you continue to receive their forwards that are not cleaned up, or they are still not using BSS, write to them, drawing attention to your netiquette note. Ask them to respect privacy and help educate their friends by including the netiquette note in messages that might be forwarded.

Layers of Forwards

Cleaning up email, removing the lists of contacts, is sometimes easier said than done. Some people (unknowingly) forward messages as attachments (instead of forwarding inline). In some cases, you can't directly edit the inner layers of the messages.

You probably remember opening a message which contained only a list of contacts and an attachment. You opened the attachment, which was another list of contacts and an attachment. After doing this several times, you funally arrived at the original message.

In the good free Thunderbird email program, in the View menu, you can check Display Attachments Inline to see all the attachments at once. (Use with caution.) You might find similar features in other programs.

Try Reply

If you can edit the nested attachments, try doing a Reply instead of a Forward. Typically Reply does not include attachments, but in Thunderbird, if you have Display Attachments Inline checked, you will probably be able to edit the entire message. (Remember to later uncheck Display Attachments inline.) If you don't have that feature try Copy and Paste.

Copy and Paste

To clean up the contacts, if necessary, copy the content to the clipboard and paste it into the new message or word processing document for editing. But sometimes there are several pictures in the message, and you discover that even if they appear on your computer screen, they might not reach your recipients. You could save the pictures as files, and then reinsert them into your cleaned up message. But if there are so

many pictures that it is not practical to reinsert them, try searching the web.

Search The Web

Often you can find the same message on the web. To prepare for searching, select a section of text which you think would probably not be edited by prior recipients, and paste it into Google (search line). Just search for an entire paragraph, for instance. Google will discard the words it cannot use. If you find the message and it is not a scam, consider copying the address (from the address bar), and pasting it into your message.

If You Are Really Serious

If all else fails, it is pprobably not practical to forward the message. The answer is not to go ahead and forward it anyway, with the names and addresses. Remember, you do not want your information on junk lists. Remember the golden rule. But if you are really determined, and have the experience, you could edit the source code.

Just a Start

There are actually several ways to minimize spam. This is just one way to get started: clean up email, use BCC, and insert a Netiquette Note to educate and remind your friends. Even if you don't notice any difference in your spam level, observe proper netiquette out of respect for your friends.

Be Careful

No matterhow careful you are, you might eventually become overwhelmed with spam and have to get a new email address. Spam is a terrible international problem. It is not only ugly and annoying - it can be dangerous! It is not even safe to look at messages from people yopu don't know (unless you know how to look safely). Be careful out there.

Hank Pearson (hankpearson@asciigroup.org) is the ASCII webmaster, and has served in many capacities including President, Treasurer, and Editor.

Editing Email Source Code

by Hank Pearson, ASCII

If you have exhausted typical methods of cleaning up email messages, you could edit the source code. This is not for everyone, but some people actually find it interesting, quick, and even practical.

It seems intuitive that you could save the message as a file, edit the file with a text editor, save it, open the file in your email program and forward the message. You cannot count on that working if your message contains pictures. But there is a way to do it.

You need to be using a good email client (a program on your computer). If you use web mail, you'll have to experiment on your own. Good luck.

In the great free Thunderbird program, for example, create a new folder with a distinctive name such as zzedit. (Empty and compact the folder if it exists.) Copy (don't move) the message into that folder. Close Thunderbird. In Windows Explorer, find zzedit. (In Thunderbird zzedit is a folder; in Windows Explorer (as seen by the operating system), zzedit is a file, without an extension.)

Open the file in a text editor (such as Notepad++). Carefully remove the names and addresses (looking for @). If you see two copies of the message, one plain text and the other HTML, edit both of them.

When you're at it, get rid of any vertical ines (quote bars) allong the edge, delete each blockquote and the enclosing angle brackets (< >), and the rest of the text in those brackets.

Save the file as plain text. Open Thunderbird. Ta-da.

Toggle Editor's Note:

You can do this editing within Outlook Explorer, but the author's right. This is not for everyone. Are the e-mails that you receive really important enough to go through all this rigamarole? Most of mine aren't. No offense intended!

What are RSS Feeds?

By Constance Brown, President, Canton Alliance
Massillon Users Group, OH
The Memory Map, September 2009
http://camug.apcug.org constance (at) mystepco.com

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What are RSS Feeds? According to the Wikipedia, *RSS (most commonly translated as 'Really Simple Syndication' but sometimes 'Rich Site Summary') is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video in a standardized format.*

Let's see whether we can translate that into everyday language. Most of us have favorite sites or blogs we visit regularly - perhaps news, genealogy, weather, or other types of sites that are updated regularly. Instead of having to click on bookmarks to navigate between sites, or typing the URL of each site, it is much faster to have one location that posts links to the latest updated information. That is done by subscribing to an RSS Reader. Both Yahoo & Google offer readers, and there are other choices as well.

I subscribed to the Google Reader by visiting www.google.com/reader. Because I already had a Gmail account, I was able to login immediately and add subscriptions. That is done in one of two ways: clicking on an icon or copying code by clicking on the URL of the feed and pasting it in Add Subscription on your Google Reader home page.

Let's walk through two examples. We'll start by clicking on Add Subscription. A search bar opens that allows us to search for an RSS Feed. I will type The Repository and click Add. Links pop up on the right side of the screen, one of them titled The Repository. Next I will click the + sign by Subscribe. I am then given the option of adding the link to a folder. I want to create a new folder titled News, so I will click Add to a Folder and select New Folder. A screen pops up that allows me to name the folder. Super simple!

Let's look at a different example. In this case we want to add a link to The Christian Law Association at http://www.christianlaw.org/cla/. While browsing their web site, we find an orange broadcast symbol that stands for link to an RSS Feed. When we click on it, a page of code pops up! No need to panic! We will click on the URL and copy it (I use Ctl + C), open the Google Reader, click on Add Subscription, paste the URL in the search box, and click Add.

Some sites let us add a subscription by simply checking an icon that says Google Reader. We click the link and a window pops up that allows us to login to our account and add the link.

In the future it is simple to go to www.google.com/reader, login, and view updates. We can indicate that we want all messages older than one day to be marked as Read. Now only today's unread links are bold. We can organize links into folders. Yes, we can unsubscribe and we can add new subscriptions, change the folders in which they are stored, view the links as lists, share, search within links, and more.

Why not try it using this technology. You will get the latest information in one easily accessible place, thus maximizing precious time.

Panda Cloud Antivirus Released

By Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

http://www.cloudantivirus.com
http://www.cloudantivirus.com/en/threat-information/
http://www.cloudantivirus.com/forum/index.jspa
http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2355828,00.asp
http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/product/290839/review/cloud_antivirus.html

In early May, 2009, I wrote about a novel idea from Panda Software, a Spanish cyber security company. At that time Panda had released an early beta (pre-release) version of its innovative antivirus program that was substantially different than the other competitive products available at that time. As a beta, it was not in a polished final form, and had some issues with some users, and some mixed reviews. In mid-November, Panda released its production version of Panda Cloud Antivirus, version 1.0, as a totally free (for personal use) antivirus program which runs smoothly on Windows XP, 2003, Vista (32 and 64), and Windows 7 (32 and 64).

What is unusual about Panda Cloud Antivirus (***www.cloudantivirus.com***) is that it uses a ''cloud'' or a series of high speed networked computers to carry out most scanning, rather than the client computer that it is running on. According to published tests, this results in a reduction of up to one-half of the processing time and load on the system, compared to the industry average of antivirus products. Since Panda Cloud does not use as much computing overhead as its competitors, many users have stated that they have experienced a significant increase in performance, as Panda Cloud does not have as much ''drag'' on the system, since it only consumed about 3% of the processing power of the computers on which it was tested. Another unusual feature is that there are no virus signatures to download, as the cloud of powerful networked computers that do the virus scanning are continuously updated, such that there is no periodic updating of the software on the computer. Panda calls its Cloud product, ''the first antivirus without an update button''. This ensures that the Panda Cloud user will always be referencing the very latest in detection capability and digital malware signatures, a feature often lacking when users do not continuously update the conventional antivirus installed on their computers.

To download and install Panda Cloud Antivirus is a very simple process. The downloaded install file is about 22 megs in size, and downloads quickly on a broadband connection. Once downloaded the only decision that the user must make is to click on the ''Accept and Install'' button, and the software quickly installs. Since there are no large updated signature file to install, Panda Cloud is ready to function immediately without any further intervention of decisions to be made by the user. This has to be one of the simplest installation processes that I have ever tried. While I did not need any technical support, Panda Cloud offers free technical support via its online forums at ***www.cloudantivirus.com/forum/index.jspa***.

Panda Cloud Antivirus requires an active internet connection as Panda calculates a digital signature for the files on the computer, and sends that signature to the cloud for instant analysis and feedback. Once a file has been determined as safe, a process that happens so fast as to be nearly undetectable, Panda knows not to resend that signature to the cloud, unless that file has been changed. My first full scan seemed a little slow taking longer than usual, as thousands of files were checked and determined to be safe, but subsequent scans were much faster because Panda Cloud did not have to recalculate and evaluate any unchanged files. According to Panda, its library of digital signature files is over a terabyte in size, a file size that would be prohibitive on a personal computer. As I type this, Panda's ''Collective Intelligence Monitor'' is reporting that it has analyzed an aggregate of over

84 million distinct files, and identified which ones were malware, and which were safe. In the most recent two hour period, Panda Cloud has analyzed over 15,000 new files; the number for all of yesterday was over 166,000 new files. It should be noted that these are all unique files that had not been previously analyzed by the cloud. Panda claims that the cloud can instantly analyze over 99% of all new files it receives, but about one-half of one percent requires Panda's staff to manually analyze the new files for threats. In the past week, Panda Cloud had detected and cleaned over 600,000 computers which were infested with just one or more of the top 10 malware threats, and does not include the computers infected with less common threats that were cleaned by Panda Cloud.

Even though Panda Cloud Antivirus 1.0 has only been available for a very short time, it has already won some accolades. PC Magazine tested Panda Cloud Antivirus 1.0 and awarded it its coveted ''Editors' Choice Award'', tying for the best detection rate during real-time scanning. Panda Cloud outscored the previous top-rated product in the detection of key loggers, the pesky malware that can steal usernames, passwords, account numbers, and enable identity theft. In its tests, Panda Cloud scored a perfect score in detecting rootkits, those often difficult to detect malware items that may hide in the registry and other hidden locations. Panda Cloud also tied for the top ranking in detecting ''scumware'' and ''scareware'', those fraudulent pop-ups that tell the user that his computer is infected, and that for a steep fee, will clean his computer. While generally excellent in detecting malware, PC Magazine reported that Panda Cloud had some difficulties in actually removing some malware, including some rootkits. PC Magazine stated that Panda Cloud was among the best at keeping a clean system free of malware, but was less effective in cleaning an infected machine than some of the other products tested. Despite these shortcomings, Panda Cloud Antivirus 1.0 won the PC Magazine ''Editors' Choice Award''.

Another computer magazine, PC World, tested a late beta version of Panda Cloud shortly before the release of version 1.0. PC World stated, ''Among all of the free antivirus software we tested for our latest roundup, Panda Cloud Antivirus was the best app at blocking known malware.'' When writing about using the cloud as a detection tool rather than conventional signature files, PC World said, ''The approach is intended to take advantage of the latest signatures without the need for signature-database updates - and if its excellent showing at detecting malware in AV-Test.org's zoo of half a million samples is any indication, the approach works. Panda's app produced an impressive 99.4 percent overall detection rate.''

If a user has an active internet connection, and needs a top-rated free antivirus product that is excellent at keeping clean systems clean, and has about the lowest drag on system performance, than Panda Cloud Antivirus 1.0 Free Edition would be a wise choice.

Sandy's Tip of the Week - Google Searches

by Sandy Berger
sandy@ compukiss.com, www.compukiss.com

When you perform a search with Google and you see something you are interested in, you click on a link that takes you to a new page. Often you click on something on that page and are taken to (yet) another page. This can make it difficult to return to the first search page which lists your original search results. But there are two easy ways to do this:

1. You can use the down arrow next to the back button. This usually lists about nine of the previous pages that you have visited so you can simply choose the original search page from the list. It will list the term that you entered followed by the word Google.

2. Even easier, you can set Google up so that when you click on any of the Google search results, the web page will open in a new window, leaving the original search page open so you can easily return to it. Just go to *www.google.com*. Then click on the *Preferences* link to the right side of the Google search bar. Look for the area that says *Results Window*. Put a check mark in front of *Open search results in a new browser window*. Then scroll down to the bottom of the window and click on the *Save Preferences* button.

Using the second method makes it easy to get back to the original search results page., but it opens up a new window every time you click on a link in the search results. You may love this or you may hate it. If you try it and don't like it, just return to Google *Preferences* page, and uncheck the box that you previously checked and click on the *Save Preferences* button again.

WORD PROCESSING NOTES & TIPS

Using WORD 2007 or OFFICE 2007 Sometimes May Cause a Problem

by Jerry Heaton, Word Processing SIG leader,
Central Kentucky Computer Society

Recently a CKCS member received a resume attached to an Email and he could not open it and called me wondering - why? The document was titled RESUME.DOCX.

Before I answer that question, first let me say that Word 2007 and Office 2007 work just fine, in fact, I enjoy using these new programs with the many improvements they have made and I like the way the new 'Ribbon Bar' works. Once you learn the program - it is great - actually outstanding!

The problem with the new WORD program occurs when you send a Word 2007 document to someone who uses an older version of Word, such as Word 2003 of before. Those older programs create documents with a file extension of .DOC therefore cannot read or open the new file extension .DOCX.

There are two solutions to the problem.

1. If you are using an older version of Microosoft Office (2003 or before) then I recommend that you install a ''compatibility pack'' in order to open and edit the .DOCX file format. Go to Microosoft for this download <***http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=941B3470-3AE9-4AEE-8F43-C6BB74CD1466&displaylang=en***> and this allows you to view, edit all Word 2007 documents. That same compatibility pack will also let you view, and edit all Excel 2007 and PowerPoint documents as well.

2. If you are a user of Word 2007 and you want to send a document to someone else, select SAVE AS and click on Word 97-2003 Document and whoever you send it to will be able to open it, regardless of which version of Word they have.

In fact, for the time being, I save ALL of my documents in the older version until the majority (of users) upgrades, then I will use the better format (.docx). To set the older format as your default in Word 2007, click on the MICROSOFT BUTTON>WORD OPTIONS>SAVE and select Word 97-2003 document (*.doc).

Actually, all Microsoft Office 2007 documents have all been changed to different file extensions. Word is ,DOCX instead of .doc; Excel documents are now .XLSX instead of .xls, PowerPoint documents are now .PPTX instead of .ppt. There is no compatibility pack of the database program Access which is in 2007 and is now .MDBX.

OPERATING SYSTEM NOTES & TIPS

Repairing file registry permissions may solve setup problems

by George M. Holloway, SWIPCC Member

I encountered a problem in performing an update for Adobe Flash player version 9 to 10 on my Sony Vista notebook. When attemprting to install the update, I would get:

Error during Flash Player installation
Failed to install. For troubleshooting please see:
http://www.adobe.com/go/tn_19166

At that Adobe link for troubleshooting they listed:

Uninstall previous version of Flash Player
Download Adobe Flash Player
Troubleshooting Adobe Flash Player for Internet Explorer
Unable to view Flash content

Drilling down the third item (troubleshooting) I discovered that ''A damaged Windows system registry or incorrect permissions in the registry may prevent Flash Player from installing or registering correctly.''

After first trying the other Adobe suggestions without success, the remaining option was that my problem was indeed associated with the registry or permissions.

Googling ''fix Windows Registry permissions'' led me to the following link: ***http://blogs.msdn.com/astebner/archive/2006/09/04/739820.aspx***

There I found an article by Aaron Stebner (MSDN) in which he described a .NET Framework 2.0 beta 2 installation problem that was caused by incorrect access control list (ACL) permissions on some registry hives.

Aaron described using a tool in the Windows Resource Kit called SubInACL to reset file and registry ACLs to help solve his .NET problem. He added that this tool can be used to fix many setup problems.

After performing a full backup and carefully following Aaron's instructions I successfully installed the Adobe flash update.

Curious to see if this had made it possible to install two Office 2003 updates that had failed up to this point, I tried them again and they now installed without incident.

I ran into the same problem with a new netbook running XP Home. Using the same tools and procedure above the problem was resolved there also.

If you encounter problems with software installations and have exhausted the fixes recommended by the manufacturer, I would recommend you investigate this solution. Do keep in mind that you must always do a full backup of your hard drive before doing work on the registry, because you can potentially render your computer inoperable.

HARDWARE NOTES & TIPS

Remapping your keyboard

by Tom Spindler
SW Louisiana User Group
Bits & Chips, November 2009

What do you do if you have a few dead keys on your keyboard? It may just need a simple cleaning, which is another topic. If it is still not functioning after cleaning, and it is a desktop computer, a new keyboard is a simple plug and play option that can cost under $10. Note that if it is a PS/2 connector you need to turn off the computer before swapping out cables, but if the connector is USB it can be hot-swapped (plugged and unplugged while the computer is running). Even if you are using a laptop, this could be an option if you seldom use it anywhere other than at a desk. If, however, you have a laptop that is frequently on the move, you may benefit from the information below, as a replacement laptop keyboard is not an inexpensive prospect.

One option to deal with a failed keyboard, especially if there are only one or two dead keys, is to use a keyboard remapping program to assign keys you seldom/never use (such as the Insert key) to replace the functions of a key you DO want to use. As an example, I have a laptop with a dead ''End'' key, which I frequently use when typing. I used a program to map the End key to the Insert key and vice-versa. I then made a simple set of labels with masking tape to re-identify the 2 keys. If the keys had been the same size (unfortunately they were not) it would have been even easier - pop them both off and physically swap them. The only downside to this option is that the remap program won't kick in before the operating system starts, so it won't work, for instance, if you are editing your BIOS.

There are many freeware keyboard remapping programs available for various operating systems. DOS and its Windows offspring, Win9x and ME, have a feature for keyboard remapping. This was not included in Windows 2000 and XP. The one I use in XP is ''KeyTweak'' for WindowsNT/2000/XP/Vista/Win 7 from <***http://webpages.charter.net/krumsick***>. Others for Windows include ''SharpKeys'' <***http://www.randyrants.com/sharpkeys/***> and ''TradeKeys by PC Magazine'' <***http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,764194,00.asp***>. For some other options, read <***www.usnetizen.com/fix_capslock.php***> or do a Google search - <***www.google.com/search?q=keyboard+remap+keys***>. PS: You can even use one of these tools to use an Apple Keyboard with your PC!

Options for Linux

You can remap keys using xmodmap, but if you are not comfortable doing so, there are simpler ways,including XKeyCaps (***http://www.jwz.org/xkeycaps/***), a graphical front-end to xmodmap. It opens a window that looks like a keyboard; moving the mouse over a key shows what KeySyms and Modifier bits that key generates. Clicking on a key simulates KeyPress/KeyRelease events on the window of your choice. It is possible to change the KeySyms and Modifiers generated by a key through a mouse-based interface. This program can also write an input file for xmodmap to recreate your changes in future sessions.

More on how to remap keys with xmodmap:
http://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=354969 #post%5Fmessage%5F2115845
http://www.paganini.net/index.cgi/linux/nocaps.html
http://www.in-ulm.de/~mascheck/X11/xmodmap.html
http://www.xfree86.org/4.2.0/xmodmap.1.html
http://snarfed.org/space/thinkpad+keys+in+firefox

More:
<www.google.com/search?q=keyboard+remap+keys+linux>

Options for Mac

Mac OS X 10.2 adds the ability to install a new keyboard layout by putting a file or bundle in a standard folder. See ***http://developer.apple.com/mac/library/technotes/tn2002/tn2056.html*** for details.

DoubleCommand (***http://doublecommand.sourceforge.net/***) is software for Mac OS X (a kernel extension) that lets you remap keys, in other words change the way your keyboard works. Often used to make a PC keyboard more comfortable with a Mac, swapping the Alt (Option) and Windows (Command or Apple) keys, since they are in swapped positions on Mac and PC keyboards. DoubleCommand is a quick and easy way to fix this if you use a PC keyboard with your Mac..

Power to the Pixels

by Dave Christenson,
The digital photo guru and member of the Fox Valley PC Association, Illinois
www.fvpca.org deanholste (at) sbcglobal.net

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I suspect that everyone reading this has at least one digital camera. What criteria did you use when buying it? Size, features, cuteness, need, impulse? Some or all of these? Maybe. But I'll bet that two you definitely considered are price and pixel count. All other things being equal, low price and high mega-pixel count is good! Right? Not always. I'll certainly go along with the low price bit, but let's think about the pixels a bit.

Why do we want more pixels? Obviously, because the picture, or image, is made out of pixels, the more pixels we have the more detail the image can contain and the greater we can enlarge it, or more cropping we can do. If we go beyond the capabilities of the count, we get what's called pixilation, or, more informally, stair-stepping, where a diagonal line zig-zags. Also called, for obvious reason, ''the jaggies.'' So, why don't we necessarily want the most pixels possible for the price?

Well, everything in this world is a compromise, including us. We all make unnecessary noise, so do pixels. When light from the lens hits a pixel it puts out an electronic signal, proportional to the amount of light striking it. But, there is also a residual si❖gnal in a pixel, that is, a signal that it puts out whether or not light is hitting it. This is called noise. This is on top of the wanted signal, and the lower the brightness of the image, the greater the noise appears. Thus, it shows up more in photos taken in dim light. But it's always there, and in all cameras. It appears more obvious in areas of smoothness, such as sky, or human skin, and causes the image to look somewhat rough or granulated. (To those who are used to film, it's more or less the equivalent of grain.) Altogether, noise is something really undesirable.

What's the easiest way to reduce the amount of noise in a pixel? Easy, make it bigger! Now, do you see the conflict? If we make the pixels bigger to reduce noise, then we have to have fewer of them on a given size sensor. Or, we can have bigger sensors. This method definitely works, but at a price. A bigger sensor means a bigger camera, and a higher price. Large sensors are expensive, huge sensors ridiculously so. (A giant sensor or a new car, your choice!) There is software in cameras designed to analyze the noise and reduce it. It works, but it has limitations distinguishing between noise and signal. Software packages can be purchased at varying price levels to reduce noise, they help but don't cure the noise problem, if you want to get into that.

You would think that camera manufacturers, being aware of the problem, would design their cameras to have a reasonable compromise between sensor size and number of pixels. The designers could, but specifications are given by the marketing group, who are well aware that ''Pixels sell'' So, what should you do?

Well, consider how you are going to use your photos. Are you going to print 16" x 20" photos on high resolution glossy paper? Are you going to crop out an itsy-bitsy portion of the center of the picture and enlarge it? If so, I'm afraid you will have to bite the bullet and get a larger sensor camera. But if you are taking photos of birthday parties, vacations, and get-togethers, and want to print them as 4x5's or e-mail them, then I wouldn't be too concerned about pixel counts. Maybe cuteness is more important.

8 Tips for the Beginning PC Builder

By Matthew Murray, Extreme Tech

You never forget your first time--building a PC, that is. You usually spend way too much time getting too little done, and though you end up with a system that probably works, you're not really sure because your hands are too scratched up to use the computer right away. Most first-timers aren't immediately sure they want to be lifers.

But that's natural. PC building, like anything else, is a skill that requires time, patience, and above all practice to perfect. But the results are almost always worth it, even when the process isn't ideal on your initial go-rounds.

We're assuming you already have a basic idea of what to do to build a PC--this isn't a step-by-step guide. But if you're a newbie, the following tips should save you some time and frustration.

1. Research, research, research. The most important part of your build happens long before you even pick up a screwdriver, and that's making sure you buy all the right parts. Spend as much time as you can on sites like Newegg.com, which have advanced search systems, verifying that all the components you're looking at work together today and will continue to do so tomorrow. Some specific questions you'll want to keep in mind:

- If you're buying an Intel processor <www.extremetech.com/topic/0,2944,t=Intel Corporation&s=25680,00.asp>, is it of the right series Core i7 <www.extremetech.com/article2/0,2845,2333939,00.asp>, Core i5 <www.extremetech.com/article2/0,2845,2352494, 00.asp> to fit in the motherboard you're considering?

♦Do the motherboard's RAM slots and the DIMMs themselves have comparable speeds to reduce the possibility of performance bottlenecks?

♦ Does the motherboard have all the ports you need or want for your peripherals?

♦ If you think you may want to upgrade later, are you leaving plenty of room for expansion in terms of drive bays, card slots, and so on?

♦ Does your power supply have sufficient wattage to, uh, power all your other hardware? (Warning: Arithmetic may be required!)

2. Ground yourself. It's easy to charge yourself up with static electricity, especially if you're working in a carpeted room (or if you have to walk across one to get to where you're building). But what's just an annoying shock to you can be devastating to computer hardware. To be sure you're

safe, discharge yourself before touching anything with sensitive circuits. Many PC toolkits come with antistatic wrist straps, and you can go that route if you want, but they can be inconvenient. A less restrictive way: just touch some of your case's bare metal. It'll be a moment of discomfort, but you'll get over it--a lot of PC hardware isn't as resilient.

3. Watch your bags. While we're on the subject of static: It's tempting to throw away potential garbage when you're unpacking prior to starting a build, but antistatic bags (such as the one the motherboard comes in) are worth hanging onto. Whether they're for holding components temporarily while you install something else, or for longer-term storage, the bags will help you preserve your tech investment.

4. Allow more time than you think you'll need. Things always seem simple when you're looking at parts in boxes or reading their manuals. But they can suddenly get a lot more complex when you're actually trying to install something. Leave time for dropping screws inside the case (and fishing them out again--see tip 5), struggling with DIMMs that don't lock down the way you think they should, and especially figuring out the front-panel wiring scheme. These snags can trip up even experts, so don't expect instant magic from start to finish.

5. Get grabby. You already know your most important PC-building tool is a Phillips-head screwdriver. But just behind it should be a three-pronged grabber. If your screwdriver's head isn't magnetized--or, heck, even if it is--you're all but guaranteed to have to fish out screws from uncomfortable nooks and crannies in your case at least once during a build. The grabber, which has extendable wire prongs, is thinner than your fingers, giving it the ability to grab screws when your fingers can't. One comes standard in almost every PC toolkit--get to know it well.

6. Put power first. Install your power supply unit (PSU) into your case before you do pretty much anything else. It'll be disappointing to find that there's not enough room to squeeze it in once you've added your motherboard, fans, drives, and other hardware. Put it into place first, then drape the cables somewhere out of the way while you work on everything else. Organizing the cables will be a pain, but it's a lot better than finding out you can't weave the PSU past the heat sink on the CPU.

7. Think outside the case. Do as much work as you can *before* inserting your components into the case--that will give you a lot more room to maneuver when doing tricky things like installing the processor and heat sink. Depending on the layout of your specific motherboard and the design of your hardware, this may not be possible, but it will automatically lower your blood pressure if it is. If you have removable cages or brackets for your hard drives or SSDs and optical drives, chances are you'll find things a lot less bruising if you can do most of the assembly outside the case first and then integrate everything later.

8. Don't get discouraged. Building your own PC is pretty simple once you set your mind to it, but there are lots of little places you can go wrong. Even pros sometimes screw up the brackets on the DVD drive, forget to connect a power cable, or confuse a couple of the front-panel wires. And even if you know exactly what to do, you can find yourself getting tripped up more easily than you might think. (Properly seating that Intel heat sink on the processor is maddening for *everyone*.) But be patient and stick with it--the results are almost always worth the trouble. No one's perfect the first time at bat, but the first time you hit the power switch and watch a computer you built from scratch boot up, you'll feel like you hit a grand slam.

Have a favorite tip for beginning builders we didn't list here? Leave a comment, or e-mail it to us at editor@extremetech.com.

GENERAL INTEREST

Microsoft Scanner & Camera Wizard

by Bob Elgines, CRCC Editor, Colorado River Computer Club, Arizona www.crccaz.org elginesz@rraz.net

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

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

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

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

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

Help Lines

SOFTWARE HELP	Advisor No.	HARDWARE HELP	Advisor No.
Win 95/98/ME	2, 3, 4, 7	Reformat Hard Disk, FDISK	2, 4, 5
Win 2K/NT/XP	2, 3, 7	Install Hard Drive, CD-ROM/RW	2, 4, 5
MS Word	2, 7	Install Video Card	
MS Excel	4	Deleting Files, Wiping	6
MS PowerPoint		Internet/Intranet	6, 7
WordPerfect	1, 7	Audio Cards	4
QuickBooks	8	MP3 Files, WMA Files, WAV Files	4
Norton/Symantec AntiVirus	2, 3, 6, 7	Burning CD's	3, 5
Norton System Works	2, 7	Partitioning Hard Drives	2
CompuPic/CompuPic Pro	3, 7	Net Objects	7
Winzip, WinRAR	6	Homesite	7
JV Registry Cleaner	3	MS Access	
Outlook, Outlook Express	2		
Internet Explorer	2, 7		
Netscape Navigator	7		
Instant Messaging	2		
Installing Software after Reformatting	5		
Ccleaner	3		
Easy CD DA Extractor	3		

ADVISORS	PHONE	HOURS
Fred Shelton [1]	(253) 752-0120	Variable
Bob Henkel [2]	(253) 537-6732	8A-8P anyday
Tom Stepanek [3]	(253) 922-7939	7-9P Mon-Fri
Carl Tenning [4]	(206) 824-3843	6-9P Mon-Fri
Oclad Wesley [5]	(253) 503-7833	6-9P
Bob Thomson [6]	(253) 752-5582	
Ray Mills [7]	(360) 692-7568	6-9P Mon-Sat
Sandee Gimblett [8]	(253) 952-3538	

Tacoma Open Group for Microcomputers (TOG)

New Member Application/Existing Member Change of Address Form

For **Tacoma Open Group** annual membership, send form (if needed) & **$25** to Bob Henkel., 10613 25th Avenue E., Tacoma, WA 98445. Make checks payable to TOG

Please print or type. Date:_____ Sponsored by:_____

Member's Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____ State:_____ Zipcode:_____ Plus Four_____ Country:_____

Home Phone: (____)_____ Work phone: (____)_____ E-Mail Address_____

TACOMA MEETING

When: **Mon 8 Mar 2010 -7:00 PM**
Where: SE Tacoma Community Centre
1614 99th Street E.
Tacoma, Washington

From I-5 take Exit 127 (Hwy 512) to Portland Ave., north on Portland to 99th, left over tracks. Building is on south side.

Future Dates: 2nd Monday of Month

TOG BOARD MEMBERS

Deadline: 15th of this month to appear in next months' issue, if room

Corporate Sponsors:

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www.rm-a.com

How To get To The Meeting

For those readers still unfamiliar with how to find our meeting place we have reproduced the map showing its relationship in Tacoma to Portland Ave S. and the 512 Freeway. The 512 Freeway can be entered from I-5 in Tacoma on the west or from Hwy 167 in Puyallup on the east. Proceed to Portland off-ramp and turn north to 99th Street. Some folks in the middle of Tacoma may prefer to take Portland southbound to 99th. At 99th turn west over the tracks and there you are!

TOGGLE

Tacoma OPEN Group for Micros
1808 Lenore Drive
Tacoma, WA 98406-1920

Change Service Requested

PROGRAMS

This Month's Meeting

This will be a regular monthly meeting. Meeting discussions are always interesting and the ever-popular Q&A (Question & Answer) period is sure to pique your interest, come up to your expectations and tickle your fancy. Come and share your own experiences, problems and discoveries.

ProgramPresentation

At the March 2010 Meeting of the Tacoma Open Group for Microcomputers Dave Rowe will give a presentation entitled

Setting Up a Wireless Router
- Just the Basics