TOGGLE

THE MICROCOMPUTER TURN (ON)

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR TACOMA-SEATTLE AREA MICROCOMPUTER USERS

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In *Keeping Passwords Safe* the author discusses the problem of finding the desired password in a privately held list.

In *WARNING: 81 Apps Accessed My Personal Info Online* the authornotes that some apps don't seem to keep your passwords as secure as ge would like and may be sharing your info with others. If you use sites requiring a password youshould read this.

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General Interest

In *Look Back Tech* the author looks back over the last 30 years or so of the computer revolution. Worth a read.

In *Travelling With a PC from THIS AND THAT* the author discusses what to take with you when you go on vacation. For example she says: *''My accessory kit contains a USB connected 750G hard drive, very compact and light, a reduced size USB keyboard (easier to use than the netbook keyboard) and a small mouse. Of course you can tailor your kit to suit yourself. ''* Read the article and decide what items will fit ***your*** needs.

In *Have Fun and Learn with PAINT* the author describes in some detail how to use this program that has been built into Windows for years. Most users never seem to use Paint to any great extent. Here's your chance to learn more about it.

In *Streaming Music - An Alternative Method* the author talks about a couple opf methods provided with Windows ro do the job but also suggests a more general method not depending on Windows. If you are interested in sharing music with computers throught the house, take a look.

HARDWARE NOTES & TIPS

What is a Raspberry Pi?

Demo'd by Carl Tenning at the February 2013 Meeting
Tacoma Open Group For Microcomputers

The Raspberry Pi is a credit-card sized single board computer. It can display on a television screen through a composite video cable or through a hi-definition DVI or HDMI monitor. Two USB ports support a keyboard and mouse. It has a Broadcom BCM2835 system on a chip which includes an ARM1176JZF-S 700 MHz processor. It has 512 Mb RAM and uses an SD memory card as a solid state hard drive. It is currently selling over the internet for $35. A plastic case, however, is an additional $13.50.

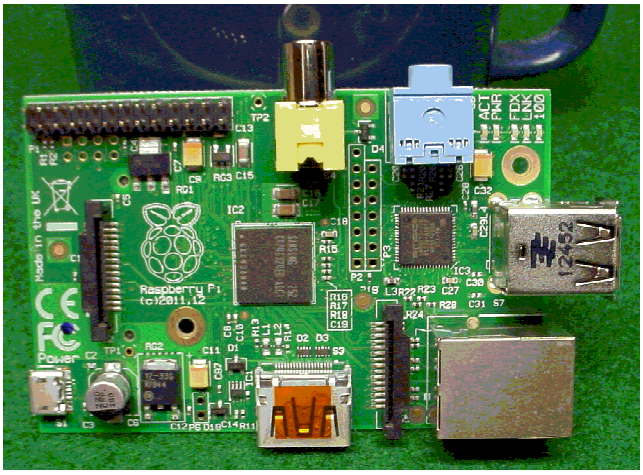
The board itself also has an Ethernet port as well as a 3.5mm audio output jack.

A version of Debian Linux is available for download. The download is a disk image that must be burned to the SD Flash memory device to make it bootable. (Ed. note: SD = Secure Digital.) The whole unit operates on 5 volts DC from a USB power supply. It does, however, require a USB power supply that provides the full rated 1000 ma output. Many of the inexpensive USB power adapters do not provide sufficient output even though they show a rating of 1000 ma. My experience was that I needed a more robust power adapter, like a Staples Model 19707 designed for powering two USB devices.

The minimum size SD memory is 2 GB, but more is better. I got a 16 GB SD memory on sale at Fred Meyer for $12.95.I suppose you can use even larger ones depending on your budget.

Editor's note:

Various components and complete assembly prices are advertised on the Internet



Figue 1 - Card Alone

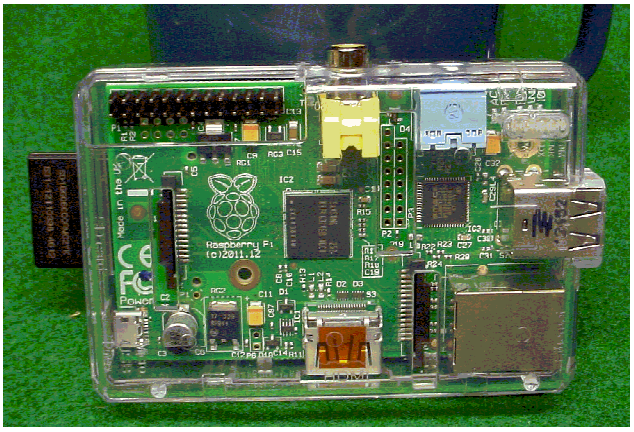


Figure 2 - Card With Case

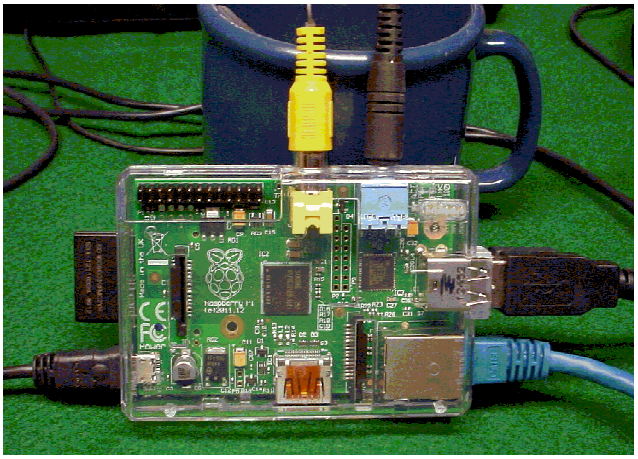


Figure 3 - Raspberry With Connections

Figure 4 - Using DVD Player Screen with Keyboard and mouse

COMMUNICATIONS NOTES & TIPS

Deleting Saved Passwords on Shared Computers

by Tim Worldstart.com as seen in
Big Bear Computer Club Bearly Bytes February, 2013

Question:

I use Yahoo for my emails. In the sign in box, when I enter my User ID, my password will automatically appear, which defeats the privacy purpose of the password. This concerns me somewhat, because from time-to-time, I use a shared computer. I have tried to sign out/in to see if that will keep the password from reappearing to no avail. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Answer:

The reason the password was saved is because at some point you clicked save my password or remember passwords and the password has been stored in the web browser. Don't worry though, because removing the password isn't too hard. Some browsers let you remove specific saved passwords, while others require you to wipe out the entire list.

Internet Explorer: (deletes all saved passwords)

First click on the gear next to the favorites star in upper right hand corner and click on ''Internet Options.'' In the general tab click ''delete'' under the browsing history section. Click off all check marks except for ''passwords'' and click OK. Next time you're prompted to remember password, select ''no'' or ''never for this site.''

Google Chrome: (delete individual passwords)

First click on customize and control Google chrome (the three vertical bar's next to the bookmark star) and click ''settings.'' Click show ''advanced settings'' then click ''Managed Saved Passwords.'' Locate the Yahoo web address and click the X next to it to delete that saved information. Next time your prompted to remember password select ''no'' or ''never for this site.''

Mozilla Firefox: (delete individual passwords)

Click on the Firefox button in upper left hand corner of screen, then click on the options menu and ''Options.'' In the security tab, click on ''Saved Passwords.'' Locate the saved password for Yahoo and click ''remove'', then click ''close.'' Next time your prompted to remember password select ''no'' or ''never for this site.''

P.S. A great solution to this problem is to setup multiple user accounts for a shared computer. You can each have your own desktop, web browser bookmarks and files and set a login password to make sure that the right person uses the right account. You can create accounts by going to User Accounts in Control Panel and clicking ''Manage Other Accounts'' then ''Create A New Account'' in Windows 7.

Keeping Passwords Safe

by Alan German, Ottawa PCUG, January 2013

I normally only use one or two login passwords and so, previously, I have never bothered to check out password encryption programs. However, recently, I seem to have had to consult my ''top secret'' hard-copy file of web site passwords in order to access various obscure sites that I use only infrequently. While this file folder is a useful resource for storing multiple passwords, the difficulty comes when needing to locate a given password. Typically this means leafing through multiple printouts of login credentials for a wide range of web sites that aren't arranged in any kind of logical sequence. I suppose I could organize these listings in a loose-leaf binder, rather than using a simple file folder, but it is probably even more efficient to use a computer-based password manager.

The essence of these software systems is an encrypted database, opened by means of a master password, that contains listings of individual web sites and their associated login credentials. Even better, most of these programs offer a way to enter a userid and password for any given site more-or-less automatically, thus expediting the login process. My password manager of choice is KeePass, primarily as it is opensource software that garners good reviews, but also because the Windows version has a Linux equivalent (KeePassX) which means that I can use the same password database on both platforms. There are both 1.x and 2.x versions of KeePass with Version 1.23 being compatible with KeePassX. Consequently, it is KeePass Version 1.23 that is reviewed here.

By default, KeePass offers to store passwords for three groups of applications, namely Internet, eMail and Backup systems. I only require to store passwords for web sites and so opted to set up a new database in the Internet group. The only requirement is to select a master password with which to access the database. Optionally, one can also specify a ''key file''. This is an additional security measure since both the master password must be entered, and the specific key file must be present, before the password database can be opened.

With the database open, a new set of login credentials can be entered by selecting ''Add Entry'', either by clicking on an icon, or by using the program's edit menu. The subsequent dialogue box has fields for Title, User name, Password, URL and Notes. An icon is associated with each listing and this can be selected from an available set of icons or a custom image can be used. The entry can be set to expire on a given date and time; however, by default, the expiry date is unchecked.

The password that is entered (and repeated as a double check) is encrypted in the final database and is displayed as a series of asterisks. A button (three dots) lets you see the actual password string behind the asterisks (when the encrypted database is open). The ''quality'' (i.e. strength) of the

selected password is roughly indicated by the length of a horizontal bar, and an indication of the number of bits used in the string. For the paranoid amongst us, there is a built-in password generator that will produce (presumably) incredibly secure passwords. My test used a 256-character string producing a password with a full horizontal bar and 535 bits.

Clearly, one could use KeePass purely to login cedentials. The web sites are listed in alphabetical order so retrieving a given record is quite simple. One could then copy and paste the userid (User Name) and password (having used the ''three dots'' button to extract the encrypted text) from the data record into the login prompts on the web page. However, as noted earlier, KeePass provides an option for the program to ''fill-in the blanks'' on the login screen. This process is a little non-intuitive and, in my case, required reading through a section of the web-based KeePass Help Center (Help - Help Contents - KeePass Help Center - Features - Auto-Type) a couple of times before I clued in on this technique.

The first trick is to hit the drop-down ''Tools'' button in the lower-left corner of the data record for any given website. With the desired website open in the browser at the log-in page, one clicks on ''Auto-Type: Select Target Window''. Then, one uses the second dropdown menu to select the appropriate listing which in my test case was ''Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG) Inc. - Mozilla Firefox''.

The second trick is to navigate to ''Tools - Options - Advanced - Auto- Type'' in KeePass's main menu and enter a keyboard shortcut in the ''Global auto-type hot key combination'' field. I opted for Ctrl + Alt + P as the keystroke combination that would automatically populate a web site's login credential fields.

Even then the process turned out to be somewhat hit and miss. For example, I couldn't get the system to work for OPCUG's web site as KeePass returned the login credentials for a different entry. And, in my DropBox account, KeePass selected the correct entry, but populated the E-mail field (effectively the userid) with my DropBox password instead of the user name! However, the auto-type process worked fine for some other web sites, e.g. National Capital Freenet.

While the automatic login process appears to be fraught with difficulties, KeePass does at least let me store my infrequently-used web site login credentials in an electronic format, and provides a readily-available resource for this information when it is needed. So, no more leafing through dozens of pieces of paper for me!

Bottom Line

KeePass Password Safe (Open-source)
Version 1.23
Author: Dominik Reichl
http://keepass.info/

WARNING:
81 Apps Accessed My Personal Info Online

by Greg West, APCUG Advisor for Regions 6 and International User Groups; Vice President, Sarnia Computer User Group, Canada, gregwest (at) alternatecloud.com

When I scanned Google for invasive Apps I found six Apps that were non-Google apps that had access to my personal information. Who is accessing your personal info?

Scary...It should be.

Wired magazine agrees. ''You may trust Google to keep your mail safe,'' but would you trust an interesting startup app by unknown college kids? Wired asks you to also consider what a disgruntled employee can do or even ''an engineer working in his 20 percent time [at Google maybe]'' Here is a must read detailing this topic: ***<http://bit.ly/wired-security>***

Not scared yet?

Do you use Facebook? Is it secured? Of course, you went into Facebook's security settings and set them all. Even if you did, are you sure someone is not peeking into your personal life, still? You bet they are.

I scanned my computer and found 81 ''intrusive Apps'' in Facebook alone and they could access my personal information in various degrees. Here is what I found intrusive Apps could do with my Facebook data:

66 apps can use my name somewhere
81 apps have access to my personal info
5 apps know my home location
2 apps are able to access my contacts
51 apps can access my 24/7 Facebook app
52 apps have access to my media and files

The Naked Security blog, by Sophros, one of the leading security and antivirus companies, says, ''Of course, there are many legitimate apps and websites which you can give permission to connect with your account - but that doesn't mean you have to have a free-for-all [in downloading them].'' Sophros goes on to say that apps that you give permissions to are potentially not safe anymore, ''And, in the case of Facebook, it could put your friends' information at risk, as well.'' One reason is the free-for-all way many simply give their info to anyone out there. Here is another must read: ***<http://bit.ly/nakedsecurity>***

''OK, so what can we do?'' The big tech guns such as Mashable, Tim O'Reilly, Techzilla, MNSBC and many more, recommend this free and amazing software app ''MyPermissions.'' This program scans your computer (and no, they don't have any accesses) for all invasive apps on your computer and/or mobile devices. After the scan you are given the complete list of apps that are a possible threat and gives the number of how many can access what information.

Now you can click on the icons of the apps listed and go through and remove apps you do not trust. In my case I simply clicked the ''Nuke All Intrusive Apps'' button and after several minutes all apps were removed. Of course you don't have to go to this extreme if you want to go through each app and alter settings. I will add them back on a need-to-have basis.

Wired magazine listed ways for you to ''Stay Safe'':

Clean up your app permissions, especially ones you no longer use.

Think before you authorize an app. Put on your detective hat and research the app.

Whenever in doubt, change your password in the given program.

To get the ''MyPermissions'' software go to: ***<http://mypermissions.org>***. You can find video tutorials at ***<http://alternatecloud.com>***. .

APP OF THE MONTH - zoom.us

http://zoom.us This is an easy way to set up an online conference call with up to 15 people. It is fast and free and the best part is the clarity of screenshots and video. The screen resolution, by far, beats Skype. Screen sharing is easy to use and is great for showing family members photos or videos and giving your business people a PowerPoint presentation without leaving your home. I have been helping Rayjon Sarnia (***http://www.rayjon.sarnia.com/***) who is planning on using this for some of their presentations to organize their missions to Haiti. To see how Zoom.us works, watch this video from the Wall Street Journal: ***<http://on.wsj.com/RQuI8J>***

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For more tech help: ***<http://alternatecloud.com/>***

WORD PROCESSING NOTES & TIPS

PureText - Removes Text Formatting

By Rolf Nijhuis, microCHIP

Have you ever run into unexpected problems when you performed a copy/paste of text between 2 different brands of word processors or between a website and an application on your PC ? Well, help is available.

The problem occurs during the copy action which includes not only the visible text and all formatting code associated with the source text (but is invisible to you). So during the paste action, this formatting code is also pasted into the destination location. It can yield surprising results which are often very difficult to fix.

One solution is to paste the text into Microsoft WordPad, which will automatically strip-off the formatting. Then you must copy the stripped text from WordPad before pasting it into the final des-tination.

A second and more elegant solution is the use of a small piece of software called PureText. This program puts a small icon on your lower right taskbar. First, perform your initial copy (which includes the hidden formatting) into the clipboard. Then a simple mouse click on the PureText icon will automatically strip the formatting from the text in the clipboard. Now you can safely paste your clean text into your destination loca-tion.

What PureText will and will not do:

To quote from the PureText web site -

''PureText only removes rich formatting from text. This includes the font face, font style (bold, italics, etc.), font color, paragraph styles (left/right/center aligned), margins, character spacing, bullets, subscript, superscript, tables, charts, pictures, embedded objects, etc. However, it does not modify the actual text. It will not remove or fix new-lines, carriage returns, tabs, or other white-space. It will not fix word-wrap or clean up your paragraphs. If you copy the source code of a web page to the clipboard, it is not going to remove all the HTML tags. If you copy text from an actual web page (not the source of the page), it will remove the formatting.''

Website:
http://stevemiller.net/puretext/

PureText is free. See above link for details. -ed?

OPERATING SYSTEM NOTES & TIPS

Setting Custom Text Size in Windows 7

Big Bear Computer Club Bearly Bytes February, 2013

Windows 7 features the ability to manually choose preset text sizes larger than the standard ''100%'' setting. But you aren't limited to just those preset options. If one preset size is too big and another is too small, you can create your own perfect size.

The option to change text size is can be found in your computers ''Control Panel,'' which is located inside the ''Start'' menu. Inside the Control Panel window, locate ''Appearance and Personalization'', then ''Display''. Here are the options for changing text sizes. Choose ''Desktop Gadgets''

This new window provides a links to access features for changing how your operating system displays imag-es on your screen.

To reach the options for changing text sizes, click the ''Display'' link, which is located near the top of the window above the ''Desktop Gadgets'' heading.

At the right side of the ''Display'' window are two of the preset text size options, but these radio buttons wont help you set a custom size. Click the ''Set Custom Text Size (DPI)'' link at left side of the window, instead.

In the new window is a box labeled ''Scale to This Percentage of Normal Size.'' It seems that this option would let you choose a custom size, but it only gives you the ability to choose between ''100%,'' ''125%,'' and ''150%.'' Even typing your cus-tom size will automatically re-vert to the nearest preset op-tion. For instance, if you type ''140%'' it will automatically switch back to ''150%.''

Instead of trying to change the box, click anywhere on the ruler icon located directly under-neath the box and drag the ruler with your mouse toward the right to increase the size, or to-ward the left to decrease the size. Drag your cursor slowly until you reach the custom size you want to create, such as 122% or 135%..

Click the ''OK'' to save your change. Depending on your Windows settings, your change may not immediately take effect. If the text size on your screen didn't change, restart your computer to apply the new custom size.

GENERAL INTEREST

Look Back Tech

by Greg Skalka, President,
Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA, October 2012 issue, Drive Light, www.uchug.org, president (at) uchug.org

No matter how modern your technology may be, you usually can't escape your past. The introduction of the personal computer 30 years ago started a revolution in how we deal with correspondence, communications, photography and music. This revolution resulted in an evolution of capabilities over three decades, culminating in the Ultrabooks, tablet computers, personal music players and digital and video cameras we have today. In the fast-paced and ever-changing world of computers and consumer electronics, the past, as defined by different features and capabilities, can be as recent as yesterday. And unfortunately, something new and improved usually means something else just became obsolete, sometimes before its time.

Unless you just came out of a 30-year coma, you probably have computer files, media and devices that are not fully compatible with the latest in computers and electronics. For those of us that have been using computers and technology for even a short time, moving to the next, newest, latest and greatest will involve change. How do we bring along the content we have created and used in the past? How can we continue to use our favorite old devices?

Fortunately, there are a number of devices available to address these issues. They are often called translators, converters or copiers, but I like to think of them as ''look back'' devices. They can help us look back to an earlier time, bridge the divide between technologies and bring our content, be it music, photos, video, documents or information, along with us as technology evolves. And boy, does it ever evolve.

Imagine archaeologists stumbling upon an undiscovered ancient library. Despite alphabet and language translation issues, they could probably eventually learn quite a lot about the time period in question, as ancient civilizations typically used information recording technologies we can still easily use today. Assuming they are in good condition, carved stone tablets are still as readable now as they were when carved thousands of years ago. Even the information in paper books preserved from a hundred years ago is still easily accessible. That may not be the case, however, with information stored from only ten or twenty years ago.

Imagine instead opening an unclaimed storage locker that has been closed for 10 to 20 years, and finding it contains lots of important and interesting information. Unfortunately, it is stored on Betamax, VHS and cassette tapes, LP records, 8 inch, 5.25 inch and 3.5 inch floppy disks, SmartMedia flash memory cards and bare Parallel ATA (PATA) hard drives. You might feel the archaeologists have an easier task in obtaining their information. Even if you could come up with functional hardware to read all these old media types, how could you provide the data to someone that wants to access it on an iPad?

Fortunately, there is look back technology available to access and translate a lot of that old media. Although current computers no longer have drives to read removable magnetic disks, and the latest Ultrabooks, Chromebooks and iPads don't even have optical disc drives, there are a lot of USB external drives available for these older media types. I have not seen (at least recently) any USB external drives for reading 8" or 5.25" floppy disks, so for those you might have to rely on an old working computer. USB external drives are readily available for 3.5" disks, however, and are great when you have older equipment (like electronic test equipment) that can only store to its built-in floppy drive. There are also plenty of USB external optical drives available to read and write CD, DVD and even Blu-ray discs.

There are a number of options when it comes to getting information off of older computer hard drives. If you don't have a computer that supports the older drive, there are plenty of hard drive external enclosure kits available to interface all sizes of PATA and SATA hard drives to USB. The Apricorn DriveWire Universal Hard Drive Adapter is one of several similar products that can easily connect any size or type of bare hard drive to USB for data transfer. It is great for transferring files you forgot you needed from those old computers that won't boot anymore, or have no removable media in common with your new computer. For bare SATA drives, there are also quick-change docks available to easily access them through USB or eSATA.

A lot of laptops and tablets have slots for reading the removable flash memory cards commonly used in digital cameras, but most can only accommodate SD (Secure Digital) cards. Many of the older or less popular media formats, like CompactFlash or SmartMedia, are not supported in new devices. There are a lot of USB adapters available for almost any memory card format that has ever existed, allowing these cards to be read again. I have one USB media adapter that claims to accommodate 56 different types of memory cards.

Though almost everyone now captures and enjoys audio-visual entertainment through digital means and devices, including digital still and video cameras, personal digital music players and streaming audio and video, the all-digital era is at most only two decades old. Many of us still have music, pictures and video in an analog format, which makes them more difficult to enjoy in our digitally-oriented world and makes the originals more vulnerable to loss or degradation over time. Fortunately, there are many look back devices available to help bring these analog items into the digital world.

For printed materials like photographic prints, a good flatbed scanner can make excellent digital scans. For less critical material, a hand-held scanner can digitize much quicker with good results. Where the original is a film negative or slide, there are a lot of reasonably priced film and slide scanners available to allow those old memories to be more easily accessed and permanently preserved in digital form. At one end of the spectrum are precision film scanners that make high-resolution scans but require more time to scan. There are also lower-cost film scanners based on digital camera sensor technology that make very fast scans of reasonable quality. These scanners, such as ones made by Wolverine Data, make it possible to convert large collections of slides or negatives to digital files in a reasonable time. There are services available to perform these conversions for you for a fee as well.

For those that have large collections of vinyl audio records, cassette tapes or even 8-tracks, there are devices that can be connected to your computer through USB to digitize from almost any audio source. These devices take in right and left channel audio inputs, and so require that you still have an appropriate and working player available. There are also USB players for vinyl records and for cassette tapes, which allow those media to be played and digitized through your current PC or laptop. These are great when your record or tape collection was preserved, but you no longer have a turntable or cassette player that works. There are also many devices available for digitizing analog video, such as from camcorders or VCRs, but these all rely on you having a working player to provide the analog electrical signals.

The look back devices so far described allow legacy data storage to be accessed by current computers and analog media sources to be digitized. But what do you do when you have legacy hardware, like a parallel port printer or a hand-held GPS receiver with serial port interface, that you still want to use? There are USB to parallel converters, so that you can electrically connect that parallel port printer to your Chromebook. There are also USB to serial converters, which provide me a way to connect my old Magellan hand-held hiking GPS to my laptop (which has no serial port) and download tracks. Computer technology seems to advance much faster than some other electronics, and it seems a waste to have to buy a new GPS simply because your new PC doesn't support the interface it uses.

The last look back application is in telecommunications. Today all computers have either a wired Ethernet connection, a Wi-Fi capability, or both. It was not too long ago, however, that the only way to get on the Internet was through a dial-up connection with a modem. Unfortunately, there are still parts of the rural U.S. where dial-up may be the most reasonable option. Since modems disappeared from new computers many years ago, the best way to connect your Ultrabook to the Internet in these locations may be through an external USB modem.

The problem with advancing technology is that it makes everything obsolete eventually. This means there will be a bright future for these ''look back'' devices to handle the things we expect in our current computers at some point. While USB is pretty universal, I don't expect to find a cloud with a USB port on it.

Travelling With a PC from THIS AND THAT

By Elizabeth B. Wright, Computer Club of Oklahoma City wright599new(at)sbcglobal.net

As the birds gather to plan their trip South for the winter, so do some of us. But what to take with us? Lighter weight clothing for that hoped for sunny climate, although experience tells us we cant really get far enough South in the continental USA to guarantee that. Maybe the mountains for skiing. But along with our necessities, some of us now take along our link to the world, our laptop computers.

Are you driving or flying? Either way, I have found that the smaller Netbook type computers are easier to carry. Even with accessories, they usually weigh less than laptops. And with the right add-ons, they can be every bit as useful as their larger cousins.

My accessory kit contains a USB connected 750G hard drive, very compact and light, a reduced size USB keyboard (easier to use than the netbook keyboard) and a small mouse. Of course you can tailor your kit to suit yourself.

When flying, in addition to the USB hard drive, I pack several USB flash drives, the higher capacity the better. Because part of traveling is the opportunity to take pictures, with digital cameras it is possible to download them to the external hard drive or to the flash drives in order to have backup copies of them. Many netbooks have rather smallish internal hard drives, so having extra storage capability is great.

Another advantage to the Netbook computers is the small size makes it easier to put them in a hotel room lockbox along with the USB flash drives and/or the USB external drive. The mouse will also fit, but the smaller size keyboard may not. But since the external keyboard is not essential to using your computer, you can better risk leaving it in your suitcase when out of the room. Nothing left in a hotel room is 100% safe, so keep that in mind.

The other great advantage to traveling with your computer is access to the internet. However there are some security risks involved with connecting to free Wi-Fi networks like those available in many restaurants, airports, hotels, etc. Take time to search the internet (from home) for information on how to best insulate your laptop from the bad guys.

Each computer is different and you will have to determine what will work best for you. Most netbooks and laptops now are built with Wi-Fi capability. This can be programmed to only connect when you tell it to. The default is usually to connect whenever it detects an open network. This can be risky. Some networks are secured and require a password to connect, but others are open to the world. Before leaving home, check with whomever you know to be knowledgeable about securing your netbook/laptop while surfing the internet from free Wi-Fi locations.

Most of what I keep on my netbook is not particularly valuable to anyone but me, but there are some passwords which I would prefer to keep private. One bit of advice is to avoid transacting banking business or other financial business online from public Wi-Fi sites. The same source for this information, which was quoting the FBI, also said not to go onto the internet.

But mostly that is what we want to do when using our computers away from home. It does leave us in a bit of a pickle. Thousands of people at any given time are using these networks. Just go into any national bookstore chain that boasts a coffee shop and most of the tables will be filled with people working diligently on their computers.

As for passwords, the old advice to change them often is as valid today as in the past. Especially those used for accessing your email and other personal websites. A paper list of the email addresses you plan to contact while away from home or office is preferable to keeping the same list on your computer. I keep mine in the safest place I can manage, either the hotel room lockbox or as close to my body as possible. Keeping it in a purse or billfold is risky, but if all else fails it beats leaving it lying around the hotel room. The main reason for making sure it is safeguarded is to keep it from prying eyes (including anyone who might just photograph your list and leave it where they found it). This step is a courtesy to your friends, relatives and business contacts that are on your list.

Happy Traveling.

Have Fun and Learn with PAINT

Jim Cerny, Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
Newsletter: Sarasota PC Monitor (www.spcug.org)
jimcerny123 (at) gmail.com

Feed your creative side!
Learn a little about computer graphics.

I've always liked the Paint program -- it comes free with Windows. Sure, there are other drawing and graphic programs you can use, many of them free on the internet, but since everyone who has Windows has the Paint program, you might want to know a little about it. To open Paint on your computer click on the ''Start'' button in the lower left of your screen, then move your mouse to ''All Programs'' and a list of your computer programs will be displayed. Scroll down to the ''Accessories'' folder and click on it. In the list of programs in the Accessories folder find ''Paint'' - click on it once and it will open. You can play with Paint and make your own drawings and you can open a photo in paint and then draw or put text right on the photo. But before we do that, let me tell you why I like the Paint program and why I think it is worth your time to learn about it.

Paint is an excellent program for new computer users because it can teach you some basic computer commands for doing graphics. You can draw and work with shapes, colors, lines, pictures, and more. But the important thing is that what you learn in Paint will come in handy in many other graphic programs. Paint is also an easy program to learn on your own by using its own ''help'' option. When you open Paint (in Windows 7), click on the little blue circle with the tiny white question mark in the upper right corner of the window (or just hit the ''F1'' key on your keyboard). Then click on the article title you want to learn about. I suggest starting at the top and read all the sections if you have not used Paint before. Don't worry, the entire help article is not long and you can read it all in less than a half hour. But you really need to actually do what the instructions tell you so that you will build up your computer skills. The program is simple enough to learn easily and it will introduce you to some great computer graphics. But, on the other hand, Paint is limited in what it can do. For example, it is not intended to be a complete photo editing program by any means.

Play with Paint for a while and learn how to draw and change shapes. Select different colors and draw some lines, circles and squares (to draw perfect circles and squares, hold down the ''shift'' key while you drag your mouse to create the shape). Try selecting different brush types - you can select oil or water color, for example, or crayon or marker. Notice how you can see ''through'' some colors to the others underneath (Paint prior to Windows 7 does not have this feature). Now draw a text box by clicking on the text tool which is a capital letter ''A''. In the box will be the insertion point ready for you to type your text. You can make the box ''transparent'' or

''opaque'' and move it wherever you want. Make a mistake? - just click on the ''undo'' arrow, the small blue arrow curving to the left at the very top-left of the Paint window.

One thing Paint can do is allow you to put text right in your photo. If you click on ''help'' you will see the ''Adding text'' title - click on it to learn how. But let me step you through this, one step at a time (in Windows 7), to introduce you to this:

1. Open the Paint program (see instructions above).

2. Click on the dark blue rectangle in the upper left of the window. This used to be the old ''file'' menu but in Win dows 7 the word ''file'' is gone. (No, I don't know why they removed the word ''file''!).

3. Click on ''Open'' which will display a window in which you can find the photo you want to work with in Paint. Click on the photo and click on ''Open'' at the bottom right of the window. The photo will now be in the Paint program window - but wow -- look how big it is!

4. Why so big? Well, I guess the Paint program is used to dealing with images with fewer pixels, but it's no big deal - let's zoom out to see the whole image at once. Click on the ''View'' tab and then click on the ''Zoom out'' tool until you see the whole image in the window. Now we can work with it much more easily.

5. Click on the ''Home'' tab and then click on the ''Text'' tool - this is the large capital letter ''A'' in the ''tools'' section of the Home tab ribbon. You are now ready to draw a rectangle in which you will type your text.

6. On the photo, drag your mouse (hold down the left mouse button) to draw a rectangle. If you draw it in the wrong place, just move it to where you want by dragging it with your mouse. You can also change the size of the rectangle by dragging the little white ''handles'' at the corners or sides. Try it!

7. When you draw this rectangle, the ''Text'' or ''Text tools'' tab is opened for you. This is where all the text editing tools are, and there are not that many.

8. The ''insertion point'' is already in the rectangle ready for you to type your text - but wait a second, where is that insertion point again? It is in the upper left of the rectangle you drew, but it may be VERY tiny! Can you even see it? The Paint program had no idea how large your photo was going to be so the larger (i.e. more pixels) your photo is, the smaller the font will appear. Remember, we zoomed out to see the whole photo. So, get the font larger by clicking on the little black arrowhead next to the number in the ''Font'' tool area and pick a big number, say ''72'' and see how big that is. You can enter numbers larger than 72 if you want by using the keyboard.

9. Select a color for your text. Pick a color from the color pallet that will stand out on the photo, such as yellow. Just click on the color you want and that color should then appear in the ''Color 1'' box. This will be your text color.

10. You can select other text options if you wish, such as bold, italic, or a different font. Also, select if you want your text box to be transparent (my choice) or if you want it to be ''opaque'' (that is, to have a background color). The back ground color will be the color in the ''Color 2'' box which you can change if you want by clicking on that box. If your text color and the background color are the same, you will see no text!

11. After you type your text you can still move the box to where you want by dragging it. Once you click outside the box, that's it, your text is now part of the photo and the box is gone. If you make a mistake, just click the ''undo'' blue arrow at the top left of the window and you can try again.

12. Save your photo with a NEW NAME. Click on the blue rectangle again (the old ''file'' menu), move your mouse to ''Save as'' and then click on your file type (probably ''.jpg''). In the window that opens, pick the folder into which you want to save your photo and enter a good name in the name box. Click ''Save''. If you do not give it a new name it will replace your old photo which will be lost.

I think you will enjoy using Paint. Let it bring out the artist in you. While you are drawing your masterpiece, you will be learning some very helpful computer skills. Computer graphics can really do some amazing things and there are several programs free on the internet if you want to do more. So have fun and get colorful!

Streaming Music - An Alternative Method

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With Windows 7, Microsoft has provided a great way to share music on your home network. Each computer (using Windows Media Player), can share the music from every other computer within a Windows7 homegroup. This is accomplished by allowing streaming when the homegroup is set up. If streaming is turned on, then the music from another computer in the homegroup will show up in Windows Media Player as available music to play. If you dont see the other computers music, you probably did not turn on streaming. If you didn't turn on streaming when you set up your homegroup, you can remedy that by going to the other computer, starting Windows Media Player, clicking Stream and choosing Turn on Media Streaming with Homegroup, and then checking Music. That should allow you to play the music from the other computer on your computer.

Though this is a great accomplishment, it may not be very useful, especially if both computers are in the same room or at least close by. But if the computers are in different rooms or on a different level in the house, or at the other end of the house, it could be very useful. Just imagine playing music from your music collection, which resides on your main computer in the computer room, on your laptop while sitting at the pool. Or in my particular case, playing the music that resides on my main computer in the computer room, in the living/family room through my very high fidelity stereo system.

Streaming within a homegroup is a great feature for computers running Windows7, but if you have network computers that are not running Windows7, there is still a way to play music on these computers. This method is called Play to. It allows you to play music in the main computer, but listen to it at another computer, possibly where there is a better set of speakers, or a room where there will be a large number of listeners. (This feature supposedly works with any electronic component that advertises the DLNA (Digital Living Network Alliance) logo, though I have not tried any.) On the computer that is to receive the music, you will have to Open Media Player, Choose Stream, Choose *Allow remote control of my player*, and click the confirmation box, Allow remote control on this network. Then, on the main computer, In Media Player, on the Play tab, click the *Play to icon.* The pop-up menu should list all the PCs in the house that have been prepared for remote operation. Just choose the computer to receive the music and youre set to enjoy the music from your main computer, using the computer in the listening room of choice.

The Alternative Method: The above two methods are built into Windows Media Player and can suffice for most network music streaming, but they are very dependent on these features being part of Windows Media Player, and future versions of Windows Media Player. A more general way to accomplish playing music in a main computer, but listening to it on another computer, is to develop Playlists that can be used on any computer in the network. Playlists developed in this fashion do not restrict you to the use of Windows Media Player, and can be used with many other music players.

There are a handful of file extensions for playlists, such as .m3u, .wpl, .pls, and .b4s. Windows media player can use .m3u and .wpl. It seems to prefer .wpl as its default setup for playlists. The .m3u extension is the most general format and is recognized by many music players, so this is my preferred playlist file extension. (If you use Windows Media Player to create your playlists, make sure you select the .m3u format when the playlist is created.) An m3u file is a plain text file that specifies the location of one or more music files. Each line indicates one specification. The specification can be any one of the following: an absolute local pathname (e.g. C:\My Music\Brooklyn Roads.mp3), a local pathname relative to the m3u file location (e.g. Brooklyn Roads.mp3), a URL (used to access a stream on the Internet). The m3u file can also contain comments prefaced by the # character.

So the alternative method consists of creating a set of playlists that can be used on any machine on your network that will play the music from your main computer (where your music collection is stored). For example, lets say we have four computers on your wired and/or wireless home network, named D1, D2, L1, and L2 (D is used here to designate a desktop computer and L is used to designate a laptop, but in reality these will be the names of the computers on the network.) And further lets think of D2 as the main computer, where the music collection is housed and maintained. (Note here that there is only one computer collection to be maintained which makes maintenance and backup simpler.

The only thing to be maintained on the computers other than the main computer is the folder of playlist files, which can be easily copied when or if the original files change.) So each playlist will be defined by a playlist file, which has the extension .m3u, and should have entries that represent the music choices on the D2 computer. Each playlist file should probably have names that represent the type of music in that playlist, like Oldies.m3u, or SentimentalMusic.m3u, or MoodMusic.m3u, or TheBeatles.m3u. The playlist file will have a series of lines of text, each one representing a music title to play. Each line will be as follows:

\\D2\E:MP3MusicCollection\MusicTitle.mp3.
Where D2 represents the main computer name,
E: represents the disk that the music collection is on,
MP3MusicCollection represents the folder the music is stored in and should be the share name for the shared folder,

and

MusicTitle.mp3 represents a song to play.
(Here is an example:
\\Desktop2\MP3MusicOn2E\MusicA\Jefferson Starship - Miracles.mp3. Note here that there is a Music folder, MusicA, within the top level Music folder, MP3MusicOn2E.)

This type of file can automatically be created by Windows Media Player when a playlist is created, or it can be created manually with Notepad. (Not Wordpad or Word because the playlist file must be a simple text file without any associated formatting. Once a playlist is created it should only be opened and edited within Windows Media Player or with Notepad, again for the same reason.)

With the above defined playlist files copied to any networked computer, you should be able to play the music at that computer; D1, D2, L1, or L2, using the music collection on the main computer, D2. Any computer that is on your network only needs a copy of the playlist files and a music player to use this alternative streaming method to allow you to enjoy, remotely, the fruits of your music collection.

Help Lines

HARDWAREHELP	Advisor No.
Reformat Hard Disk, FDISK	2,4,5
Install Hard Drive, CD-ROM/RW	2,4,5
Install Video Card	7
Partitioning Hard Drives	2
Internet/Intranet	6,7
Audio Cards	4
MPs Files, WMA Files, WAV Files	3,4
Burning CD's	3,5
Homesite	7
Net Objects	7

SOFTWAREHELP	Advisor No.
Win 95/98/ME/2K/NT/XP	2,3,4,7
Win 7	4,7
Microsoft Word	2,7
Microsoft Excel	4
Microsoft PowerPoint	4
WordPerfect	1,7
Norton/Symantec AntiVirus	2,3,6,7
Norton System Works	2,7
CompuPic / CompuPic Pro	3,7
Winzip, WinRAR	6
Ccleaner	3,4
Outlook, Outlook Express	2
Internet Explorer	2,7
RegSeeker	3,5
Instant Messaging	2
Installing Software after Reformatting	5
Deleting Files; Wiping	6

ADVISORS

Name	Phone	Hours
[1] Fred Shelton	(253)752-0120	Variable
[2] Bob Henkel	(253)537-6732	8A-8P any day
[3] Tom Stepanek	(253)922-7939	7-9P Mon-Fri
[4] Carl Tenning	(206)824-3843	6-9P Mon-Fri
[5] Oclad Wesley	(253)212-0352	6-9P
[6] Bob Thomson	(253)752-5582	Variable
[7] Ray Mills	(360)692-7568	6-9P Mon-Sat

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 11 Mar 2013 -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

TOG Web Site: http://www.toggle.org

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

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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.

Program Presentation

No formal program has been announced at press time - but perhaps Carl Tenning can expand a little more on his new toy the Rasperry Pi described on page 2.