

MOTHERBOARD

A Publication of the Computer Users Group Of Redding, CA

Volume 2012, 09

<http://cugr.apcug.org/>

September 2012

YOUR C.U.G.R. PRESENTS

4th Tuesday, September 25, 2012

**General Meeting Time For September is 6 to 8 PM
Protecting Yourself, Your Computer, and Your Identity:**



"Bob" Gostischa

It's common wisdom that avoiding suspicious web-based content and especially "dodgy" websites will keep you safe on the Internet. Unfortunately, that sort of information is "old and outdated technology." Internet security (protecting both your PC and your identity online) can, however, be demystified. This presentation focuses on normal computer users, rather than "IT geeks," and clearly explains security myths, Internet dos and don'ts, the evolution of computer threats, and more. Join Bob Gostischa, as he simplifies, clarifies, and demystifies your PC, making your Internet experience a safe one. Read more about Bob on Page 2 in the Editor's Corner.

Door Prizes

1. Toshiba

500 GB, 2.0 &
3.0 External Drive



2. 16 GB Jump Drive



3. 50 Pk CDRs



One free ticket to each member at the door!

6 pm Social & Business & 6:30 Presentation

Social time & club updates. 4:30 Presentation
Sign in at the Greeting Table and pick up your name tag and please leave it in the Tag Box when you leave. Also please stay and help reset the tables to the Library's original arrangement.

Future General Meeting

Q & A Panel, October 23, 2012, 4 to 6 PM
From October on Time is 4 to 6 PM



CUGR Calendar

CUGR Board Meeting
1 PM Tuesday, Oct 2, 2012
at Redding Library in the
Foundation Reading Room

MULTI-MEDIA
10 AM, Saturday, Sept 27
Jane Quinn SIG Leader
Digital Devices, usage of
free software for Movie
Creation, Photo Projects,
Music Projects, and Social
Networking,
and more.
See back page
for more SIG information

GENERAL MEETINGS ARE
at the Redding Library
1100 Parkview Ave,
off Cypress.

OFFICIAL WEBSITE Is
<http://cugr.apcug.org/>

For more information
call any Board member
listed on Page 2.

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Members volunteering
to help members!

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Motherboard Newsletter Policies and Deadlines

The *Motherboard* newsletter is published monthly by the Computer Users Group of Redding, PO Box 494778, Redding, CA 96049-4778. The CUG is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. Subscriptions are included in the \$25 annual membership fee. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform members of upcoming events and provide information about the use of IBM compatible computers.

Disclaimer: Neither the CUG, its Officers, the Editor, nor the newsletter contributors assume any liability for damages incurred due to the use of information provided in this publication.

Reprints: Articles from this newsletter may be reprinted by other user groups if credit is given to both the author, CUG and the *Motherboard*. Mail a copy of the newsletter where the article is reprinted

to the Editor at the address in the first paragraph of this text.

Personal Ads For Members:

Requirements are:

1. Advertiser must be a member.
2. The item must be computer-related.
3. The ad must be received by editor J. Ball by the *monthly date of the board meeting*. Sorry, no exceptions.

Other terms must be approved by the club's Board of Officers and Directors.

Article Submissions: All articles and reviews must be submitted to J. Ball by the **Monday of the monthly Board meeting** (see *Page 1 for date.*) Sorry, no exceptions.

Motherboard Editor reserves the right to make corrections and deletions in all articles in the interest of grammar, style, and space.

Editor's Corner

It's your club. Your input is of value to us...

ABOUT OUR SEPTEMBER PRESENTER:

Norbert "Bob" Gostischa, after a successful career in banking, enjoys his retirement as an enthusiast IT security expert, most notably for Avast Software. Avast is the creator of avast! antivirus software. The avast! website has a discussion and help forum, where Bob has been helping with security-related issues since 2004, having contributed over 17,000 forum interactions. avast! is one of the most popular antivirus softwares in the world. Avast has been making security software for over 20 years and has more than 160 million users worldwide.

Bob wrote, "This is a fairly recent picture of myself if you also needed that for the promo. If not, it could always be used for target practice."

As you can see, Folks, this looks to be an informative presentation as well as entertaining! So bring your family and friends — anyone you feel could benefit from the latest security knowledge for his computers. And give an extra nudge to other club members you are in touch with to come to this meeting.

It's time to think about the workings of the club and new officers. Most pending is the presidency: Fred Skill said that he could only serve one year, and so we are desperately in need of a 2013 president. Give it a thought for yourself or someone else that could help out the club for the coming year. It does not take a lot of time and the club is worth the little effort it does take. Please see Page 4 for more details.

View Sonic 24" Monitor



Nancy Ditwiler won the 24" Monitor drawing! And although it was rumored that she was not a 2012 club member, she and Harry were paid up by several months, and it was simply a mistake.

She and Harry have not been to meetings lately due to severe health problems, but Nancy said she was still using an old monitor and was in dire need of a new one and was quite excited about winning.

Congratulations, Nancy! And Best Wishes To Harry.

July Meeting



Congratulations To Our Winners!



Bill Ball won the 16 Gig Jump Drive!



Colly Lord won the Optical Wireless Mouse!

Our 2012 Ice Cream Social



Jeanie, Richardson, Anna Lee Horton, Judi Ball, and others shopped for the sodas, goodies, and utensils.

And Vice President Dick Marx provided the ice cream and some of the "ixins." Thank you, Dick. We all enjoyed your ice cream treats.

It was a great evening with many members and much socializing among all.

Welcome Renewals

Dick Franks
Herald Huddleson
Linda Mahaffey

GoGo

by George Harding, Treasurer,
Tucson Computer Society, AZ,
1-2012 Issue, eJournal, www.aztcs.org,
georgehardingsbd@earthlink.net

When you fly, whether commercial or private, you are prohibited from using your laptop, tablet or mobile phone to access the Internet. No longer! GoGo has available technology that allows you to surf the Internet once your aircraft has reached 10,000 feet. This means you can access cloudbased documents, use email, sign into web sites and access VPNs while aloft.

GoGo has the system operational in over 1,000 commercial aircraft, such as Air Tran, Delta, Virgin America and select Air Canada flights, and 5,000 private aircraft.

What does it cost? Pretty reasonable at \$4.95 per session, \$12.95 per 24 hour period or \$39.95 per month for unlimited use. You are connected to GoGo's portal where you sign in, then can surf to your heart's content. The aircraft has three antennas, two underneath and one on top. Installation is quick.

For those who need access to the Internet while in flight, this is a service well worth having.

About: GoGo

Vendor: Gogo Service

www.gogoair.com

CUGR MEMBER WEBSITES

MEXICAN-TOURS
www.mexican-tours.com
Lyle VanNorman
bbcreelmx@yahoo.com

Publicize Your Website
Here for FREE!
(Members Only Please)

Officers & Board Members Election

It's your club. Your input is of value to us.

It is time again for our election of new officers and board member appointments. Election takes place in November and new officers begin in January, 2009.

If you would like to help your club by volunteering for an office position please reply to any board member listed on Page 2. The more you and others do to help, the better our club is for all members.

There are several positions open for both the Officer and the Director positions. If you are interested in running for a position please see the various job descriptions listed below. Put your nomination in for yourself or another you think would be interested during this October meeting.

We welcome all questions. Sincere thanks for taking a moment to read this and please help if you can.

CUG Of Redding

DUTY DESCRIPTIONS FOR CLUB OFFICER POSITIONS

PRESIDENT

1. Lead club meetings and Board meetings.
2. Organize, and make contacts to publicize club events.
3. Be the organizational focal point for club meetings and all club events
4. Needs to delegate tasks.

Skills Required: Dependability, organizational skills, commitment and genuine interest in the club's survival. Very basic computer skills, such as e-mail and basic word processing.

VICE PRESIDENT

1. Cover for the President in his/her absence.
2. Assist the President in major club events.
3. Attend monthly board meetings and monthly club meetings.

Skills Required: Dependability, organizational skills, commitment and genuine interest in the club's survival. Very basic computer skills, such as, e-mail and basic word processing

TREASURER

1. Receive all monies due the CUG from all sources.
2. Disperse monies to cover all legitimate CUG obligations.
3. Manage and control the CUG'S operating bank account.
4. Report to the board of directors on a monthly basis with a detailed account.

Skills Required: Dependability, organizational skills, basic checkbook balancing skills, commitment and genuine interest in the club's survival. Computer skills are not necessary.

SECRETARY

1. Attend all Board Meetings and record the minutes.
2. Distribute the monthly minutes report via e-mail to board members and officers.
3. File and maintain all the recorded minutes in the club's secretarial log book.

Dependability, organizational skills, commitment and genuine interest in the club's survival. Ability to e-mail and use a word processing program.

Protect Yourself!

Anonymous Internet

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This came to me, and it is obviously from Wal-Mart. However, it is good advice in general, and therefore might be of help for those who are tied to Wal-Mart as well as those who aren't, because the article advises to report to a couple of sites.

Protect yourself. Internet scams are all too common these days — don't jeopardize your security. Please follow these simple guidelines to minimize your risk.

"Phishing" is the use of fraudulent emails, copy-cat websites, or pop-ups to trick you into revealing personal information — such as account numbers, credit accounts, and social security numbers. Legitimate companies don't ask for this information via email — don't supply it. To make sure you're on the website you want, look at the URL to verify it's the correct one; beware of potentially confusing or misleading site identifications, such as subtle misspellings in the URL.

Report it — If you suspect you have received a phishing email, DON'T respond to it. Simply forward the email to us at abuse@walmart.com. To help us investigate, please don't cut and paste the email, change the subject line, or forward it as an attachment. You can also report it to Homeland Security at phishing-report@us-cert.gov, or to the FTC at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov if you think you've been a victim.

Beef up your security — Security software packages (with anti-virus, anti-spam, and spyware detection) are useful for those who engage in online financial transactions. Look for encryption via Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) technology, commonly shown by a closed padlock in the lower right corner of your screen. Do not click on links or attachments unless you trust the source.

Bits And Pieces

by Rush Blodget; IMB/PCUG of Redding, rmxtwo@charter.net

CYBERCRIME

The CyberCriminals are becoming constantly more clever. I purchased several items online last month where I needed to enter my credit card number. Shortly thereafter I received a call from B of A to the effect that some unusual charges had been made to my account. On inquiring I was told that there were charges for computer accessories and a \$2 charges to a "girly" club. They presumed, I guess, and rightly so that the latter charge was not consistent with my usual pattern of purchases and that the fact that it was probably a pilot or test purchase to see if the account was valid or if it would be noticed by the owner of the account. They recommended closing of the account and issuance of a new card which I had them do.

I had just the week before had persons call me to tell me that they had received emails purportedly from me and that it was obvious from their content that I had not sent them. A complete scan of all drives by Norton Security and MalWareBytes did not reveal anything on either occasion. In fact, despite having enabled the "pop-up blocker," a "pop-up" repeatedly comes up in Norton's colors, format, and logo, telling me that my Norton's Security is outdated and no longer functioning. You are invited to choose either to verify this now or defer it. There is no "x" in the upper right hand corner to opt out of this decision. I believe that I must have fallen for this "phishing" page to invite the hacker in.

The real Norton then advises you not to click on any icons on a page that lacks an "escape" such as an "x" in the right upper corner or a return arrow.

A friend who is a sophisticated former professional technician who does a

daily security scan on his computer told me that while checking the balance on his debit card suddenly saw the amount drawn down by repeated entries. He immediately called the bank and was able to have it reversed.



I had a copy of General Eisenhower's speech to the troops as D-Day was launched given to me on CD three years ago by the chief of his WAAC detachment in Europe, 100 year old Louise Locke, that I loaded onto my hard drive only to find later that it had been deleted and in its place was a message to the effect that it was copyrighted and that I had stolen it. The moral to this is that they are still smarter than we are and that we should be wary of what we put on the Internet. They can also go in and easily turn off your "fire wall" as they have done for me several times.

All of this is anecdotal of course and I am sure that many readers of the Motherboard have had the same experiences.

TO INCREASE THE SIZE FOR READING ON SCREEN:

With WORD the easiest way is to highlight the text and then press the CTRL key and simultaneously press the "+" key — each press will toggle the size one point either way.

To Increase the Font Size for Printing one may go to FILE then to PRINT PREVIEW (not always available) and then scroll to the desired percentage of enlargement. Some articles and web pages — particularly instruction sheets that are readable in 12 point type on the screen, however, will print in what seems to be 4 point type. Of course many news articles and web pages have a PRINT or PRINTER FRIENDLY spot to click on that reformats the page for printing with a more appropriate font and leaves out the ads and sidebar.

I should mention that PRINT PREVIEW is usually not available if one uses the PRINT commands available on right clicking or uses the keyboard shortcut of holding down the CTRL key and pressing the "P" key.

Multi-Media SIG UpDate

by SIG Leader Jane Quinn, jqquinn7427@gmail.com

Weekly SIG Group meetings are every Thursday at the Anderson Senior Center from 1 - 3 pm. For special projects or one-on-one assistance walk-in is 3 - 4 pm. You can also connect to the classroom at high speed internet through SKYPE. ID is AAASCO2009.

Our monthly Multi-Media SIG is Saturday September 27 at our home from 10 am to noon. For directions contact me via e-mail above or phone, 365-0825.

Watch the club's email notices for upcoming class projects and dates.



Email Tracker Programs

Article submitted by Member Lyle VanNorman

This is great, very interesting, and a must read! The man that sent this information is a computer tech. He spends a lot of time clearing the junk off computers for people and listens to complaints about speed. All forwards are not bad, just some. Be sure you read the very last paragraph.

He wrote:

By now, I suspect everyone is familiar with snopes.com and/or truthorfiction.com for determining whether information received via email is just that: true/false or fact/fiction. Both are excellent sites.

Advice from snopes.com. Very Important!

1) Any time you see an email that says "forward this on to '10' (or however many) of your friends," "sign this petition," or "you'll get bad luck," or "you'll get good luck," or "you'll see something funny on your screen after you send it," or whatever — it almost always has an email tracker program attached that tracks the cookies and emails of those folks you forward to. The host sender is getting a copy each time it gets forwarded and then is able to get lists of 'active' email addresses to use in SPAM emails or sell to other Spammers. Even when you get emails that demand you send the email on if you're not ashamed of God/Jesus — that is email tracking, and they are playing on our conscience. These people don't care how they get your email addresses, just as long as they get them. Also, emails that talk about a missing child or a child with an incurable disease ("How would you feel if that was your child?") email tracking. Ignore them and **don't** participate!

2) Almost all emails that ask you to add your name and forward on to others are similar to the mass letter of years ago that asked people to send business cards to the little kid in Florida who wanted to break the Guinness Book of Records for the most cards. All it was, and all any of this type of email is, is a way to get names and 'cookie' tracking information for telemarketers and Spammers — to validate active email accounts for their own profitable purposes.

You can do your friends and family members a **great** favor by sending this information to them. You will be providing a service to your friends. And you will be rewarded by not getting thousands of spam emails in the future!

Do yourself a favor and **stop** adding your name(s) to those types of lists regardless how inviting they might sound! Or make you feel guilty if you don't! It's all about getting email addresses and nothing more.

You may think you are supporting a great cause, but you are not!

Instead, you will be getting tons of junk mail later and very possibly a virus attached! Plus, we are helping the Spammers get rich! Let's not make it easy for them!

Also: Email petitions are **not** acceptable to Congress or any other organization, such as Social Security, etc. To be acceptable, petitions must have a "signed signature" and full address of the person signing the petition, so this is a waste of time and you are just helping the email trackers.

TIPS FOR HANDLING TELEMARETERS
Three Little Words That Work:

(1) The three little words are "Hold On, Please..."

Saying this, while putting down your phone and walking off (instead of hanging-up immediately) would make each telemarketing call so much more time-consuming causing boiler room sales to grind to a halt.

Then when you eventually hear the phone company's 'beep-beep-beep' tone, you know it's time to go back and hang up your handset, which has efficiently completed its task.

These three little words will help eliminate telephone soliciting.

(2) Do you ever get those annoying phone calls with no one on the other end?

This is a telemarketing technique where a machine makes phone calls and records the time of day when a person answers the phone.

This technique is used to determine the best time of day for a 'real' sales person to call back and get someone at home.

What you can do after answering, if you notice there is no one there, is to immediately start hitting your # button

on the phone, 6 or 7 times as quickly as possible. This confuses the machine that dialed the call, and it kicks your number out of their system. Gosh, what a shame not to have your name in their system any longer!

(3) Junk Mail Help:

When you get 'ads' enclosed with your phone or utility bill, return these 'ads' with your payment. Let the sending companies throw their own junk mail away.

When you get those 'pre-approved' letters in the mail for everything from credit cards to second mortgages and similar type junk, do not throw away the return envelope.

Most of these come with postage-paid return envelopes, right? It costs them more than the regular 44 cents postage, 'IF' and WHEN they receive them back.

It costs them nothing if you throw them away! The postage was around 50 cents before the last increase and it is according to the weight. In that case, why not get rid of some of your other junk mail and put it in these cool little, postage-paid return envelopes.

One of Andy Rooney's (60 Minutes) ideas.

Send an ad for your local chimney cleaner to American Express. Send a pizza coupon to Citibank. If you didn't get anything else that day, then just return their blank application!

If you want to remain anonymous, just make sure your name isn't on anything you send them.

You can even send the envelope back empty if you want to just keep them guessing! It still costs them 44 cents.

The banks and credit card companies are currently getting a lot of their own junk back in the mail, but folks, we need to **OVERWHELM** them. Let's let them know what it's like to get lots of junk mail, and best of all they're paying for it, **twice!**

Let's help keep our postal service busy since they are saying that e-mail is cutting into their business profits, and that's why they need to increase postage costs again. You get the idea!

If enough people follow these tips, it will work. I have been doing this for years, and I get very little junk mail anymore.

Tablet Computers — Great For Accessing The Internet

by Phil Sorrentino, Past President, Sarasota PCUG, FL, April 2012 issue, Sarasota Monitor, www.spcug.org, pcugedit@verizon.net

Tablets are all the rage. You might think it started with the iPad, but the iPad is just the latest and greatest implementation of what started out as pen computing with a stylus on a Personal Digital Assistant, circa 1992. (I bet many of you had a Palm Pilot, or something similar. I know I did.) Microsoft even introduced a tablet or slate computer using a pen (rather than a keyboard) around 2002. (The term Tablet PC was coined by Microsoft, as a pen-enabled computer conforming to Microsoft's hardware specifications, and running a licensed copy of the "Windows XP Tablet PC Edition" OS. Things have really changed from then.) The Apple iPod-Touch, in 2008, was the forerunner of the eventual iPad in 2010. Since the iPad introduction, many similar featured tablets have shown up for sale in stores and online retailers. Tablets, in use, are even showing up on popular TV shows. I bet you've seen them used on shows where technology plays an important part of the plot, like NCIS and NCIS Los Angeles.

Tablets are basically computers, but they are built for mobility, even more-so than laptops. They are light (under 1 ½ lbs.) and there are no moving parts, so they should be fairly rugged. (There are no hard drives or optical (CD/DVD) drives.) The Operating System and Applications (Apps) are stored in semi-conductor memory so they are readily available; the boot-up time is really quick. All tablets have a touch sensitive screen which acts as both the keyboard and mouse. All interactions are done by finger movements on the screen, called gestures. Most gestures are done by one finger, like a "flick" which moves an object in the direction you flick your finger, but some gestures require two fingers such as zoom, which is an outward pinching-like movement of the thumb and pointer fingers. Most popular tablets are either 7 or 10 inches (diagonally measured), although I've seen some smaller and some other sizes. Most Tablets do not have cell phone capabilities, but I have seen some smaller ones that included phone features.

Besides the hardware manufacturer, one of the main distinguishing features of a tablet is the Operating System (OS). Currently, there are three major OSs, Apple's iOS, Google's Android, and Microsoft's

Windows Phone7. Apple has a line of tablets that use iOS, the iPad and iPad2. Many tablet hardware manufacturers, such as Motorola, LG, Lenovo, HTC, Samsung, Toshiba, ASUS, etc. make use of Android OS. And Microsoft has stated that many manufacturers will use Phone7, among them Samsung and Nokia. The User Interfaces (UI) that ride on top of the OSs are fairly similar in functionality, but have some very different features. Apple iPads are tightly tied to Apple iTunes. (What would you expect?) Google tablets are loosely tied to Google's applications such as Gmail and Google+. I haven't seen much of Phone7, but I would guess it will be tied to Microsoft products and websites. Because the current tablet universe seems to be populated by Apple iPad products and those running Google's OS, I will leave Phone7 out of some of the comparisons. As of this writing Apple has about 60% of the market, and Android has around 30% (the Amazon Kindle Fire uses Android). One of the major software differences is that Android runs the Adobe Flash software that is used on many websites to support videos. Apple does not allow Adobe Flash to run. Another hardware difference seems to be that Google supports more interfaces to get data onto, and off, the tablet. Some Android tablets provide micro-SD slots for added storage, micro-HDMI output connectors, USB ports for file transfers, as well as the ability to replace batteries.

The tablet is a great computing device for using (or consuming) data. You probably would not want to create any large amount of data with a tablet (maybe only if you have a unit with a docking or wireless keyboard). Because of its light weight, the tablet is very convenient to use for accessing the internet when you're not at a desk or table. It fits right into your lap or can be easily held with one hand while the other hand controls its operations. It is great for checking your email, surfing the internet, reading a newspaper or magazine, reading a book, watching a video or movie, reviewing your collection of home photos, playing a game (have you tried Angry Birds?), all while listening to music from your own personal playlist.

So if you think you might like a Tablet, what should you look for? The first deci-

sion is really, What OS? If you like the Apple environment, then go with an iPad or iPad2, and you're done. There are very few decisions to make, except for how much memory; 16GB, 32GB or 64GB. If you prefer the more open environment of the Android OS, then there are a few more decisions to be made. The first one is size, 7" or 10". Some manufacturers have models in both sizes, and some make only one size. The seven inch size is good if you expect to carry it around and use it in many places; it probably fits into a handbag, but probably not a pocket. The ten inch size is easier on the eyes and typically will display more of a webpage. This larger size is nice for viewing, but is not as portable.

The next thing to consider is battery life. The current range seems to be roughly between 7 and 10 hours. Some models make it easy to replace the battery, some do not. (With the iPads, you are instructed to return the unit to the manufacturer.) Internal memory and an external memory slot are another area to consider. Internal memory is typically 8GB, 16GB, 32GB and possibly 64GB. External memory may be provided by an SD slot or a mini or micro-SD slot. The external memory is dependent on the size of the chip you put into the slot, currently up to 32GB. With external memory, you can use many memory chips, one at a time, which allows you to keep different things on different memory chips. (Another memory number you may see is RAM memory. This is typically 1GB (possibly as much as 2 GB) and is similar to the RAM in a PC. More RAM usually means increased speed and better multi-tasking.)

All models provide Wi-Fi connectivity to the internet. Some also provide 3G or 4G connectivity, via the cell phone network. Cell phone network connectivity will probably require a data plan which can cost from \$30 to \$60 a month depending on your data needs. If you only connect via Wi-Fi, there is no additional expense. Most models provide a USB port for connection with a PC. When connected to a PC, data files such as pictures, videos, and documents can be transferred between the

Continued on Page 10

“Driving” Your Computer

by Diane Fahlbusch, President, ICON PC User Group, NY, www.iconpcug.org, Editor@iconpcug.org

We all know that one of the most essential components of our computer is the storage drive. It is the home of your operating system, firmware, applications and those precious files you have collected over time. Faster processors, more RAM ... are useless if there is nothing to pass through them. We now have tremendous options available to us: larger capacity, faster RPMs, newer materials, faster connections, external drives and thumb/flash drives. The more you know about them, the better you will be able to decide what is right for you.

FLOPPY DRIVES

Yes they still do exist! But they have almost waved themselves goodbye. In their day they were great, and became smaller. But as the capability of computers increased and technology advanced, they just did not have the capacity, were too bulky and very fragile little things. But, they are still designated as the A drive, and the standard “Save” icon.

ZIP DRIVES AND JAZZ DRIVES

Yes, they still do exist! These were inherently floppy drives on steroids to meet larger capacity demands, as well as being able to function faster. But these are also stored to a magnetic film, which will erode over time, and are subject to semi-severe conditions. So if you still have anything you want from these, it is recommended that you transfer your data to a newer format.

CD ROM DRIVES

These sounded the beginning of the end for floppy drives and their kin, as well as cassette tapes and vinyl records. Writable CDs are very inexpensive now, and consist of various layers. The top layer is actually a protective coating, which is why scratches to this layer may be able to be repaired with Skip Disc, or something similar. The data is stored on a different layer. There are plenty of these drives still around, and it's not a bad idea to slap one into your tower unit if you have room. This way you can burn out the CD only drive and save the:

CD/DVD DRIVE

This is the dual drive that is now

standard on any computer, and very similar in physical design to CDs. If you need to replace one, watch for read and write speeds, which are far faster than the ones just 5-7 years ago, as well as any firmware updates you might need for faster write speeds to work. Do not forget to watch the read/write speeds of the discs you buy, as well as whether your drive can burn +R DVDs. Also watch for the “new” thing from just a few years ago, dual layer. But of course the latest is:

BLUE RAY DRIVE

An essential for REALLY large capacity discs or to watch blue-ray discs with high definition graphics. Of course, if your monitor is not high definition or your computer's video card does not know what to do with HD files, you may just want to wait on this one. It's still very pricey – even the stand-alone units to connect to your HD TV.

HARD DISC DRIVES

The vast majority of storage drives available are still the good ol' magnetic discs. The original design of the rotating, rigid platters storing data magnetically by read/write heads floating on a layer of pressurized air is still the same as it was from the 1960's, but the recording density has increased dramatically. The platters themselves are not made of a magnetic material. They are coated with a thin layer of magnetized material, which has changed over the years. The platters are held together on a spindle, which requires very careful placement to allow for just enough air between each platter as well as the read/write heads.

Disc drives also contain two electronic motors. One motor spins the platters at a specified RPM. The faster the RPM, the faster the drive can access the data - and the greater the heat output. The platters do have a special coating to resist thermal-induced magnetic breakdown, but it is still very important to make sure that your cooling fans are working properly, and more important to check or change your fans if you replace the factory installed drive with one with a faster RPM. The second is called an actuator motor to control

the read/write heads. If they no longer line up correctly, they will not function properly. It is possible to reset the placement of the heads if they are no longer lining up properly – but not easy. Of course, if your drive has experienced a “Head Crash”, where the misplaced head has actually scraped along the surface of the disc, those sections are destroyed forever.

Your data is stored in digital magnetic format on the platters on disc drives. Once a brand new hard disc drive has collected any information, it will never be the same as it was in its pristine state – just as a magnet will always have some residual iron filings no matter how hard you try to remove them. And of course another way to help prevent the loss of the data is for the correct magnetization to be stored with some room to spare. But that concept of “elbow room” shrinks as there is more data stored. One way to think about this is by comparing the way some neighborhoods look today versus 25 years ago. (The Smithhaven Mall used to loom out of nothingness like Oz's Emerald City – now you can miss it because there are at least three other shopping centers/malls around it.) So if your data was originally being stored with plenty of space, you will wind up with fragmented files as that space shrinks. Defragmenting your hard disc drive is one of those easy maintenance things to do to speed up performance, because it moves related pieces of information near one another for faster access. However, you can rewrite to a hard disc drive as long as the device is working properly. Of course, there might be residual bits of magnetic charges left on that previously written space which might corrupt your file.

Hard disc drives seem sturdy because of their tough protective casings and hard materials, but they are not made to withstand sudden shock, such as being banged or dropped, especially when still spinning. Some notebook computers now come with an active hard drive protection that parks the disc heads if the unit is dropped. Hard disc drives are also sensitive to power

“DRIVING” YOUR COMPUTER

Continued from Page 8

surges (including static electricity), sudden loss of power, contamination within the enclosure, corrosion and exposure to excessive heat or magnetic fields. Some recent studies seem to show that disc drives maintained at somewhat colder temperatures do NOT outlast those at somewhat warmer ones, as previously believed. All drives will experience normal “wear and tear”. Interestingly, your disc drives are like your car – it’s better for the engine if you take longer trips instead of the short hops, or leaving it idling. One way to reduce the life of your drive is by leaving the computer on, but in an idle state. It is better to shut the computer off when you are not using it. Of course, excessive rebooting will also shorten the life of your disc drives, as they have to spin up every time.

SOLID STATE DRIVES

The newest data storage drive is the solid state drive, which is radically different from its predecessor. These drives use microchips to store the data to free, programmable blocks and do NOT contain any moving parts. Because of this they are quiet, physically smaller, use less power to operate, run cooler, can tolerate greater altitudes and temperature ranges, tolerate vibration, are not susceptible to magnetic fields, do NOT require defragmenting (actually, defragmenting adds wear for no benefit) and are less susceptible to sudden shock. (But that does NOT mean that you should be playing handball with them!) Performance is most frequently tied to the type of memory used and the controller, an embedded processor that works as a bridge between the computer’s electronics and its own, as well as a number of other factors. They will typically use either non-volatile (NAND flash) memory or volatile (DRAM) memory.

The NAND flash based memory, while being slower than its counterpart, has an advantage – it can retain information WITHOUT power. That is why your camera cards and thumb/flash drives do not need a separate power supply. This memory can be MLC (multi-level cell), or single-level

cell, the latter of which is more reliable and faster, but more expensive. Also, the NAND flash memory cannot directly overwrite a file. It must first rewrite the information to free programmable blocks of space, THEN it overwrites the previous blocks. If data was encrypted with an encryption program NOT located on the drive itself, the original data, can only be safely “wiped” by using a special “secure erase” program on the drive. Effectively, this means that your once secured information is unsecure, unencrypted and accessible. And these blocks do have a limit of 1,000,000 to 2,000,000 write cycles (1,000 to 10,000 per cell) for MLC, and up to 5,000,000 write cycles (100,000 per cell) for SLC. This is compensated for by “wear leveling” – writing to different sets of blocks each time and spreading the usage out evenly. (Think of it as a little league coach who always rotates all of the players in every game, but does a quick tidy-up at the end of the game.) This effectively means that you will eventually “use up” the memory. When that happens the drive just stops working. Granted, it may take a many years, but it depends upon how much you create, or re-create.

The DRAM provides lightning fast data transfer, and does NOT have a limit to the number of times programmable blocks can be written to. It also requires an internal battery or capacitor or other power supply, and requires backup storage systems to ensure preserving data if power is lost. These are most frequently used as internal drives in netbooks and computers. Because nothing needs to spin during boot up or starting up applications, these drives respond rapidly. Their read times are far less than hard disc drives, again because there are no heads to search for the data. However, these drives do have certain drawbacks.

For starters, solid state drives with DRAM are far more expensive, but the price is coming down. Because of this, there really are not many large capacity solid state drives available. Be wary that there are some of these drives are using a combination of NAND and DRAM. Another consideration is the write speed. Less expensive models may not be providing much faster write

performance than hard disc drives, but will be impacted significantly by the number of free programmable blocks. Solid state drives are really not the best choice for operating systems that continually rewrite to the drives while in use, such as Windows. While solid state drives CAN provide greater performance, be aware that you can only push the information through as fast as your connection can handle. Having a USB3 device will not increase the speed of data transfer if your computer’s connection is USB1. Write performance is greatly reduced when using a SATA connection. Performance of DRAM drives will deteriorate in time when there are no free programmable blocks left. Also, as previously mentioned, DRAM requires constant power. So even though your computer is turned off, the DRAM drive still requires power.

Please always remember to make educated decisions about the products you select, and set realistic expectations on any hardware you use.



Interesting Internet Finds

*by Steve Costello, President/Editor,
Boca Raton Computer Society, FL
May 2012 Boca Bits, <http://about.me/sefcug>, brcsssefc@earthlink.net*

In the course of going through the more than 200 news feeds in my Google Reader, I often run across things that I think might be of interest to other user group members.

The following are some items I found interesting during the month of April 2012.

(Long URLs shortened with the Google URL shortener <http://goo.gl/>)

- Deciphering the Power Label on Your A/C Adapters <http://goo.gl/6ljEj>
- The Best Free Portable Apps for Your Flash Drive Toolkit, <http://goo.gl/JtJio>
- Best Free Android Apps, <http://goo.gl/XyQr6>
- Webinar #11, Mastering your own domain, <http://goo.gl/xSygZ>
- How to Pick the Perfect Laptop
- <http://goo.gl/whLEM>

Staying Connected, Even in Most Remote Locations

Metro News: *Technology Travel Consumer Tips Tips For Easy Living Micro Site*



From skiing the Rocky Mountains to sailing around the U.S. Virgin Islands, getting a mobile connection in remote locations can often prove difficult — if not impossible. The lack of cellular towers in hard-to-reach areas yields minimal signals and little to no access to mobile communications services. However, new mobile technology, traditionally used primarily by government officials, can now help mobile users stay connected even in isolated locations or when cellular networks are unavailable.

An integrated satellite-cellular smartphone, the TerreStar(TM) GENUS(TM) has changed the game in mobile communications, offering a feature-rich approach to mobile satellite communications. About the size of a deck of cards, the phone connects to the AT&T wireless network for primary cellular connectivity, and gains satellite connectivity through the power of TerreStar-1, the world's largest commercial communications satellite, which acts as a cell tower in the sky. With the additional layer of satellite connectivity and security in a convenient smartphone form factor, the mobile user's everyday phone easily becomes an emergency satellite phone when the user is out of cellular coverage or the network is unavailable.

As the world's only satellite-enabled smartphone, the GENUS offers the ultimate wireless backup capability using the cellular network as the primary mode and satellite connectivity as a secondary option for voice, data and messaging. With just one phone number and one contact list -- on one device -- users with a line of sight to the southern sky can feel secure with expanded voice and data roaming coverage in the United States, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and in coastal waters up to 200 miles offshore. The phone runs on the Windows Mobile 6.5 operating system, providing rich functionality and a full spectrum of premium smartphone features, such as touchscreen, camera, MicroSD slot, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, GPS, and full QWERTY keyboard.

"This is the smartest smartphone we've seen in satellite communications, as the device pushes the envelope and satellite communications in new directions," said

Daniel Longfield, senior analyst at Frost & Sullivan, a research consultancy. "It's lightweight, has the same look-and-feel as a traditional smartphone, is small enough to fit in your pocket, yet combines the features of satellite and cellular communications to offer the most comprehensive service possible — something no other satellite communications company has figured out yet."

As a smartphone with a peace-of-mind satellite backup option, the GENUS offers mobile communications assurance with its integrated satellite-cellular service on demand. The device and service plan are priced competitively when compared to traditional mobile satellite communications devices, and

Tablet Computers

Continued from Page 07

devices. Many models also include a micro-HDMI interface for connecting to a digital TV. When connected to a TV, videos can be played on the tablet and viewed on the large screen digital TV. Bluetooth connectivity is also typically included.

Most of the popular models have processors that are quite adequate. Some of these are made by nVidia, Qualcomm, Arm, Texas Instruments, Samsung, and of course, Apple. (Where are Intel and AMD, you might ask. Low power consumption is the main requirement for tablet processors, and Intel and AMD have not been players in this arena in the past, but I think you will see some new processors from them show up in tablets in the near future.)

Tablets are now all the rage. Once you have one the real job begins; that of trying to decide what you are going to do with it. The thing that makes the tablet so useful is, like the PC, the fact that you can put Applications (Apps) on it. Many, which are becoming standard, Apps usually come with the tablet. Other Apps are easily downloaded from either iTunes or the Android Market. But the whole discussion of Apps will have to be the subject of a future article. Stay connected.

Never be out of touch, even in remote areas, when you have a phone that pairs satellite and cellular technology!

can be purchased by consumers at www.Amazon.com or through an AT&T representative (for business and government customers).

To learn more about the phone and how it works as compared to a traditional cellular-only device, go to www.YouTube.com/TerreStar.

Tips And Tricks For Enhancing The PC Visual Display, Part 1 & 2

by Bonnie L. Snyder, Member, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, CO, March 12 issue, Bits and Bytes
<http://ppcompas.apcug.org>, BonnieLS21@gmail.com, <http://tvvip.org>

Part 1

If you are in need of assistance in seeing the screen on a PC, there are several options available to help you do this. If you are using Windows 7, for instance, there is a built-in screen magnifying program that is head and shoulders above the one in Windows XP. You can run it at any time (provided your video can use the Win 7 Aero display) by pressing Windows key – plus on the keyboard. Pressing Windows key – plus additional times will increase the magnification with each press, and Windows key – minus will decrease the magnification with each press.

Once you are in the magnification program, you can set up the program with the options you want. To do this, go down to the taskbar and click on the magnify icon. A window will open toward the top of the screen and an icon that looks like a "gear" will allow you to choose your options, including having the magnification load automatically at startup. You can change options on the fly by using Win-



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Not A Renewal Reminder

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR ENHANCING THE PC VISUAL DISPLAY, PART 1 & 2

dows key – L for Lens mode, Windows key – D for Dock mode, Windows key – F for Full screen mode.

An interesting freeware program you might want to try is aRuler for Windows. It works under Win XP and Win 7. Initially it loads a ruler that you can use to help focus on the line of text you wish to read. It is configurable in length, and the ruler's visual display can be changed to the user's preference. It also includes a screen magnification option from 1X to 4X. <http://www.arulerforwindows.com/>

One of the things that can cause visual fatigue when reading on a computer screen is the brightness of the display. There is a freeware program called Tinted Window which works in both Win XP and Win 7 that can mitigate this problem. Once loaded (it is a Java executable so it doesn't install), Tinted Window comes

up in a small window. Right-click on that window and you can set up the color of the tint you wish. The window also allows for full screen or just a lens. <http://www.softoxi.com/tinted-window.html>

PART 2

A quick and easy way to magnify the information on the screen is to hold down the Control key and roll the mouse roller forward. The more you move the roller forward, the larger the display will be come. This feature does not work in all programs, so you'll have to just try it for each one. Interestingly, in Firefox, the most recent magnification done this way is "remembered" so that when initially magnified with the control key, mouse roller, it will be already magnified. You can lower the amount of magnification by rolling

down. This feature works in both Windows XP and Windows 7.

Display Tuner (Dtuner) is really nice freeware for adjusting many facets of the video and audio. When you run it (after installation), an icon remains in your system tray so that you can access it any time you feel the need to make the video display better for the comfort of your eyes. Again, this program works in both Windows XP and Windows 7. <http://bit.ly/yJcvO6>

Is that mouse cursor just too small? Well, Bigger Cursors can solve that problem. This is another freeware. All you have to do is unzip the cursors into the Windows/Cursors folder and then select the one you want via the Control Panel/Mouse listing. Once chosen, the cursor will remain that way until you wish to change it. This program works in both Windows XP and Windows 7. <http://bit.ly/xDcXRv>

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Why Join A Computer Group?

1. Benefit from a common interest in a personal (and costly) investment: Your business or personal computer.
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3. Share tips and tricks, as well as new and old ideas.
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5. Receive an informative monthly news-letter.
6. Have access to various club functions and all Special Interest Groups (SIGs).
7. Find out that no one needs to be alone and helpless with today's computer technology.

4th Tuesday

*Monthly Meetings Are At
The Redding Library*



1100 Parkview Ave.

off Cypress and to the right of City Hall.

*We will be in the Community Room, which is inside to
the left of the main library door.*



Multi-Media SIG

Saturday, 10 AM, Sept. 27, 2012

At Jane Quinn's Home, for information contact:
Jane Quinn, 365-0825, qjquinn7427@gmail.com

Learn about Digital Devices, usage of free software for Movie Creation, Photo Projects, Music Projects, and Social Networking. Includes Microsoft Windows 7 basic Instruction.

Jane also conducts classes at the Anderson Senior Center (Frontier Center), Thursday 1-3 pm. You can connect to the classroom via high-speed internet to SKYPE, ID # AAASCO2009.

Walk-ins welcome between 3 and 4 pm for tutoring or special projects.

