



PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP, INC GAZETTE



June 2011

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June 2011

“JOIN US FOR FUN AND LEARNING AT CROSSVILLE’S COMPUTER CLUB”

Volume 17, Issue 6

This Month’s Meetings

June 3 at 1 p.m.
At FFG Community Church
Photo Editing Workshop

June 20 at 6 p.m.
At 127 S. Senior Center
General Meeting

June 18 at 10 a.m.
At 127 S. Senior Center
Investment SIG

June 23 at 1 p.m.
At FFG Community Church
Photography Club

June Program

The program topic is: “Digital Image Editing”
Roger Coulther, a member of the Photo Club, a SIG of PPCUG, will discuss digital photo editing. This process deals with correcting exposure, color balance and composition of photos. Roger will talk about ways to prevent some of the problems related to these areas, review a few editing software programs, and explain alternative methods so you can find something appropriate to your use or skill level.

There is a list of volunteers for PPCUG officers and the board in the minutes of the May meeting on page 4. They were nominated and the nominations are now closed The elections will be held during the June meeting.

Scholarships will be presented at this meeting.

Tip of the Month

Keep Up With Updates

Many types of viruses and malware use known vulnerabilities in Microsoft's Windows operating system to find a loophole into your computer. Typically, the Windows Update patches fix the known issues and help keep your PC secure. If you don't want Windows to automatically update, at least configure Windows Update to notify you of the latest patches, so you can check out if there are any security updates that may be needed to fix holes in Windows.

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“FREE” Table

We have set up a table at our member meetings to share our “extra” goodies with other club members.

If you have something to give away, bring it in and put it on the FREE table. It's first come, first served. If you see something you want, help yourself.



Membership Dues and Expiration Dates

Membership dues are \$25 a year for a family, \$20 a year for an individual, and \$10 a year for a student 21 years of age or under. Your membership is valid for 12 months from the month you join (or renew your membership). Please pay your dues to the treasurer before the last day of your anniversary month. Anyone who is 30 days or more in arrears with membership dues cannot participate in the door prize drawings.

Corporate memberships are \$25 a year for the first two memberships and \$10 a year for each additional membership from the same company.

Our Club cannot exist without you, the members. Remember, you and your membership dues are important to keep the club functioning!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DISCLAIMER

All members of the Plateau PC Users Group are willing to help one another in the area of advice and tutorial instruction over the phone. If you should require more involved services or instruction, we have a few members who are very knowledgeable in several areas. As a responsible consumer, it is up to you to discuss, before retaining a member, any and ALL charges for repair services and time consuming tutorial activities.

It is not the desire of this Board of Directors to set fees for individuals for services rendered, nor the responsibility to intervene between members who enter into a contract among themselves

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Investment Club	Bob Mohar	(931) 707-0434
Photography SIG	Jim Mansfield	(931) 484-6920

Up Coming Meeting

The next General Meeting of the
PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP
Will be on July 18, 2011 at 6:00 P. M. at
127 S. SENIOR CENTER

Classes

Please send ideas for new classes to Alan Baker
(ambaker@citlink.net)

Cool Sites

http://download.cnet.com/Sumatra-PDF-Viewer/3000-10743_4-10698785.html

Free download of Sumatra PDF Reader

The Adobe PDF reader has become bloated and troublesome, requiring frequent security updates. The Sumatra viewer is a small, simple open source program. It is free and can easily fit on a thumb drive and is portable.

News of the Special Interest Groups

The PPCUG sponsors several Special Interest Groups (SIGs) tailored to meet the varied needs of our many members. Each SIG is a small group whose leader prepares material for presentation and encourages open discussion and questions. We urge you to attend the SIGs and hope you will find one or more of interest to you. Ideas for additional groups are welcome, as are volunteers to form and lead new SIGs.

Investment Club

Meets the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. at the 127 S. Senior Center. The leader is Bob Mohar . Anyone interested should contact Bob at 707-0434”.

Pleasant Hill Group

The Pleasant Hill group meetings will be announced by the SIG Leader, Dick Riesz. Meetings are held in the Pleasant Hill Community House on Main Street across from the Pleasant Hill Post Office. All members are welcome and visitors from the Pleasant Hill area are especially encouraged to come.

Photography Club

The Photography Club, a PPCUG SIG, meets the fourth Thursday of each month at the Fairfield Glade Community Church at 1:00PM. Topics vary each month but we show and discuss member's photos each month. One or two "People's Choice" photos are submitted to the Glade Vista each month for publication. The SIG leader is Jim Mansfield.

A photo editing workshop is held at 1PM at the FFG Community church on the first Friday of each month.

PPCUG ISP

We wish to thank the following for providing ISP connections:

- Frontier for DSL at the 127 Senior Center and Fairfield Glade
- Multipro for dialup at Pleasant Hill

PPCUG Website

Visit our website at www.PPCUGinc.com. The Learning Center class schedule and Gazette are all available on our web site.

Send your comments and suggestions to the
Webmaster, Don Lewis
Webmaster@ppcuginc.com (931) 456-5352

PPCUG May 16, 2011 General Meeting Minutes

The question and answer period was emceed by Alan Baker. With the use of the club's overhead screen and projector, he was able to provide answers to questions by the audience. One question on Internet Explorer 9 versus IE 8 version garnered a lot of interest. Alan demonstrated how to manage add-ons and also how Version 9 "cleaned" up the viewing area by combining the three toolbars into one. On newest version of Firefox, Favorites is now an icon "star" and there is now a choice for "InPrivateFiltering" to block pop-ups that show up when you reopen the page and show where you have been surfing. Search providers like AVG and McAfree provide a secure website icon to help you choose safe sites.

Frontier also gives you online backup service. One advantage to online backup service is your data is safe from fire on your own premises. This is safer backup than an external backup product that could be physically harmed in your home. In response to a question about tablets that are being advertised lately, some people think these are easier and fun to use. Alan voiced the thought that tablets can't replace a full desktop but mobile needs such as inventory and surveys can be done more easily with a tablet.

The business meeting started at 6:55 PM after a short break. Highlights of the board meeting were shared and any member is welcome at these meetings. Bob Mohar, head of the nomination committee, reported no nominations received. Alan outlined options for the club to be voted on at the June Meeting: Open offices are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Librarian. Membership received an email on May 11, 2011 on today's presentation and our needs were outlined. Average number of attendees is 30-35 and membership is currently 143 so this indicates a strong interest in what the club has to offer. Nominations were open and received the following from the audience:

Steve Rosenstein, President

Richard Del Frate, Secretary

Tony Gradle, Librarian/Compliance Officer

Gordon Botting, Director

Don Lewis, Director

Jim Buxton, Vice President

Alan Baker, Treasurer

Kay Cargill, Director

Bob Willis, Director

Bob Mohar, Director

Elections will be at the June Meeting and Scholarships will be presented. Digital Image Editing will be the program.

Bob Mohar gave the program: **CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE AND INVESTOR EDUCATION ISSUES**. He gave an overview of the Investors' Special Interest Group which currently has 6 members. Tonight's topics were garnered from the 6 members over the six years this group has been meeting. The slideshow and explanations were used on the overhead screen allowing time in between slides to solicit comments or questions. The handout for this program was placed on the home page of the club's website: www.ppcuginc.com. Bob also listed his email address for further questions. He also played a YouTube video that was an animated commentary on our economic situation.

Door Prizes won: 1.any book from the club's library was won by Ralph Lamkin

And 2. a Copy of Open Office on a CD was won by Nico Ceargio

Meeting concluded at 8:20 PM. Respectfully submitted by: Joan Carroll, Secretary

Smartphones (Part 2)

Control and Interaction

By Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL
March 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor
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The smartphone doesn't have a mouse to let you push a pointer around the screen, so then, how do you control the interaction? The smartphone has a touch-sensitive screen which interprets movement of a finger (or fingers) on the screen. A whole new set of "gestures" or touch controls have been developed. Some of the new gestures are the "flick," and the "pinch". The flick is done with one finger and its quick movement indicates the intended operation, like turning a page. A pinch is done with two fingers and is typically used to enlarge or shrink something on the screen. Mostly, you use your finger to point to things that you want done. Another gesture or interaction is to "Select an Icon" for movement. To do this, you Touch and Hold the Icon. After holding it for a second or two, the App will be selected and you will receive feedback. On the Droid2, the feedback is called haptic feedback, which means you get a slight vibration on the touch-sensitive screen. On the iPhone, the icons on the page begin to wiggle.

Applications or Apps are what you use to get things done. Some common and very useful Apps are Contacts, Calendar, Places, Maps, Mail (Yahoo or Google), Notes, Time & Date, and Browser. There are also Apps for YouTube, Skype and Kindle. The Kindle App turns your smartphone into a reader that has access to the Kindle (Amazon) library of books, many of which are free.

There seems to be an App for almost anything that you would like to do with your smartphone. (If you don't find an App for something you want to do with your phone, maybe you can invent one. There is always some software programmer willing to take on an interesting challenge.) In addition to Apps, there are a myriad of games available for the smartphone, many of which are free. For android devices, Apps and games are found at the Android Market. (iTunes is used by the iPhone.)

The Market is an App that comes with the phone. To get something from the Android Market, just touch the Market App Icon and you will immediately be at the front door of the Market. Here you can choose from Apps or Games or a selection that is presented on the opening screen. If you choose Apps, you can then choose to review all Apps or only the Free Apps. (The same is true for Games.) Once you find an App or game you are interested in you just touch it and if it is free, it will be downloaded to your smartphone. If there is a cost, you will have to set up an account so that your credit card can be charged. Most of the Apps that are not free are under \$10.

All of the Apps on your smartphone are installed and available in an All Apps area, which slides out onto the current home screen. (Android devices have multiple homescreens.) On the Droid2 this area is accessed by pressing an Icon at the lower-center of the display screen.

So after you have decided how to use your home screens, you can put an App there by finding it in the All Apps area and then Touch and Hold the desired App icon. When the App is selected and ready to be placed, you will get feedback and the App will appear on the home screen that was below the All Apps area. Apps can be moved between home screens by Touch and Holding the App and waiting for the feedback, then moving the App in the direction of the home screen that will be the new home screen for the App. On Android phones, an App can be deleted from a home screen, but not from the All Apps area, by Touch and Holding the Icon and then moving it to a red

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trash can that appears at the bottom center of the display.

When you want to use an App, you just touch it and it starts to perform. You will see the Icon spring into action, attempting to provide its functionality. Once started, other options may be available from a menu by touching the Menu button. (On the Droid2, the Menu is in the lower left, below the display screen). For example, if you touch a Contacts App, it will display your list of contacts. When you find the contact of interest, a touch will display all the information relating to that contact. Touching the Menu button gives you options to Delete or Edit the contact.

With all these Apps and a pretty small screen it would be nice to be able to organize your Apps; so, unlike most computers, the Droid2 has 7 home (display) screens, arranged horizontally. You expose another home screen by flicking your finger on the touch-sensitive home screen in the direction of the screen desired. For example if you are on home screen #4, the middle home screen, and you want to go to home screen #3, you would flick to the right. To go to home screen #5, you would flick to the left. Multiple home screens make it easy for you to organize your Apps. Apps that you think work together can be collected on a particular home screen. You could have a home screen for entertainment, one for work, one for family, another for sports. Any organization of Apps that makes sense to you would be appropriate.

This only scratches the surface of the features, interface techniques, and usefulness of a smartphone. Future articles will concentrate on some of the more interesting features, but I think you will now agree that:

Smartphone == PDA + (not so smart) phone.

Registry First Aid

Reviewed by Herb Goldstein, Editor, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
April 2011 issue, The Monitor
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Solving the Registry Cleaning Dilemma

Nothing much happens in Windows without control by that mysterious architecture known as the Registry. It is a humongous database repository of instructions, commands and framework for the software, hardware and just about every other kind of ware that functions in Windows. You can also think of it as the Windows brain, and fooling with it is about as welcome as brain surgery self-taught.

Unfortunately and as unwelcome as it may be, the Registry does require some basic manipulation by users from time to time. Add or remove software or change the locations of its components, make routine changes in Windows, and a whole host of other functions in everyday computer usage result in changes in the Registry. In time it can easily become bogged down with errors that can dramatically hinder the normal or optimal functioning of your computer. It's little wonder why keeping the registry clean and error free is so important, yet so avoided. It's even less wonder why the average computer user either shuns necessary Registry housekeeping altogether or winds up employing tools that do considerably more harm than good.

A clean, error-free Registry is vital in keeping your computer working properly, but finding and fixing Registry errors indeed poses a dilemma. There is no shortage of utilities that promise to make your computer function like new by taking out your Registry garbage. Unfortunately, you are most often better off living with an error-laden Registry

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than one whose key functions have been impaired by incompetent fixers.

With all these caveats in mind, I spent considerable effort, investigation and experimentation years ago to find the Registry cleaning utility that would do an honest, safe and effective job. Through several versions of Windows and most recently with Windows 7, I have been using Registry First Aid (RFA). It is a well-known, popular, easy to use and remarkably competent Registry utility that will find, fix, and prevent Registry errors and malfunctions safely and effectively. It is the only one I trust to do the job! Here's what it will do:

1. RFA will search the Registry for errors. Your first search will undoubtedly come up with an amazing number of errors. It will present a color coded list of them. *Those in green can be safely eliminated or fixed.* For each error, you will be provided with a reason for its problem and an indication of what is needed to either delete or fix it. If, for example, a software reference is not valid because it is sitting in the wrong place, RFA will discover where it rightfully belongs and offers to put it there. If no fix is possible, it offers to delete it.

Those errors that require caution in fixing are listed in yellow, along with reasons and recommendations. The choice will be yours. Those listed in red are also explained and high caution warned.

In any event, each and every error will be explained, recommendation made, and the choice for action will be up to you. No changes are automatic. You are in complete control!

2. Registry backup and restore. Before making any changes, you might want to back up your current Registry configuration. RFA stores the backup and you can at any later time restore the Registry to exactly the way it was before you modified it. Great safety feature!
3. Registry search. If you need to find anything in the Registry, RFA will do a lightning fast keyword search for you. A great feature in finding and eliminating references to software you have gotten rid of.
4. Registry management. Set up the Registry in your own parameters to function according to your preferences..
5. Defragment and compress the Registry.

While most Registry utilities offer to make your computer work faster and better by cleaning the Registry, they offer no information as to what they are doing or why. It's a blind faith and trust scenario. On the other hand, RFA bends over backwards in every step along the way to keep you safe and informed.

RFA is the recipient of numerous awards as the safest and most effective Registry cleaner available. They are well deserved. It has long ago solved the Registry cleaning dilemma for me. It is compatible with all current versions of Windows including XP, Vista and Windows 7. RFA is published by and available from Rose City Software (rosecitysoftware.com) for \$27.95.

The Tip Corner

By Bill Sheff, Novice SIG Coordinator, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA
March 2011 issue, The LVCG Journal
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Google Chrome Home Button

If you look at the interface of Google Chrome, as compared to other browsers like Mozilla Firefox and Internet Explorer, you will notice that there is no "home" button. You know, the little house icon on the toolbar? The other browsers have it, but not Chrome? It's ridiculously easy to fix.

Open Chrome, click on the Wrench icon in the upper right-hand corner and select Options. Under Home Page, put a check next to Show Home button on the toolbar.

The effect is instantaneous! Click Close and you now have a home button in Google Chrome!

PowerPoint does not open?

If you can't open PowerPoint presentations that come in your e-mails you are not alone. This can happen even with the Power Point Viewer. Try some of these tips:

1. How are you checking your e-mail? The very first thing to look at is the way in which you are checking your e-mail. If you check e-mail via a dedicated e-mail client such as Outlook, Outlook Express, Windows Mail, Eudora, etc., instead of double clicking on and trying to open the PowerPoint file from within the e-mail program, export the PowerPoint file from your e-mail into a folder on your desktop (typically done by dragging and dropping the file from your e-mail message into your desktop folder) then double click to open it. The reason for doing this is that some e-mail clients will try to open a file using its own program features and/or incorrect associations, instead of using the correct program to open the file. As such, you will typically see an error message, or no response. If you are not using an e-mail client, but a web mail interface (such as Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo, AOL, etc.) to check your e-mail, you will want to download the PowerPoint file from your e-mail to your desktop, then attempt to open the file on your computer instead of in your e-mail. Again, doing so eliminates one more possible misconfigured program (in this case your Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, or other web browser) from attempting to open your PowerPoint file by downloading or moving the file to your computer and trying to open it there.

If either of these steps opens your PowerPoint file, you have just found a solution to your problem. You may still want to look at configuring your e-mail client and/or web browser to associate PowerPoint files with your PowerPoint reader program.

2. Check your file type.

Believe it or not, PowerPoint itself can be the problem. There are currently four distinct types of files commonly output by PowerPoint, each of which have restrictions on how the different versions of PowerPoint can read them. These file types are:

PPS - Used to contain a "viewable" PowerPoint presentation. This PowerPoint file will normally open in the PowerPoint Viewer or the full version of PowerPoint without issue.

PPT - Used to contain an "editable" PowerPoint presentation. This can sometimes be viewed in the PowerPoint Viewer but will only be editable in the full version of the PowerPoint software.

PPSX/.PPTX - The same as .PPS and .PPT, respectively, but saved in a newer Open XML format introduced in PowerPoint 2007.

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Typically, you will not be able to view PowerPoint files of these types without a recent version of the PowerPoint Viewer or PowerPoint 2007 or higher. If you are unsure of which file type you are having trouble opening, right click on the file and select Properties from the menu.

3. Get with the program.

With the above in mind you will want to confirm that you do (or do not) have the correct programs installed on your computer to read them. The quickest way to do so is to update your PowerPoint Viewer to the most current version. After installing the latest PowerPoint Viewer, just about any PowerPoint file should open right up for you to view; simply click on and open the file on your desktop in the PowerPoint viewer. If it does not open, download and install the latest version of OpenOffice, which includes Impress, which is a part of the OpenOffice suite of programs. Impress has many of the same features and editing capabilities of the full version of Microsoft Office PowerPoint, but at a very hard to beat price: FREE!

4. Check your source.

If the file still fails to open, you either have a damaged or corrupt PowerPoint file, or a password protected PowerPoint file. In either case, you will want to contact the sender and have them resend the file and/or give you a password to open it.

I hope all your PowerPoint files can now open without any problem.

Clear Your Firefox Downloads List.

Do you have quite a lot of files you've downloaded via Firefox?. Not sure? Open up Firefox and click Tools>Downloads and a window pops up. Is it pretty cluttered and in need of a good clean out? To delete single downloads from your Firefox queue, simply right-click the download you'd like to delete from the list and select Remove From List. You can clear the entire list by clicking the Clear List button at the bottom of the download window.

Note: This doesn't delete the physical file from your computer; just the listing in the Firefox downloads window.

Synchronize Your Bookmarks Between Computers

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS

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In today's world, more and more of us are accessing the Internet from several different devices. We may use a computer at work, a tablet PC at home, and a smart phone or a laptop computer when we are on the go. When we bookmark a website at the home, we might like to bring up that bookmarked webpage when we are at the office or when we visit a relative. If we are using the default settings of an Internet browser, we cannot do this. However there is a way to synchronize bookmarks between devices.

Just about every web browser today offers some way to synchronize bookmarks either through an add-in, a toolbar or a setting. Most of these solutions, however, only work if you use the same web browser on each device. For instance, if you use a Firefox add-in called Sync, you can only access your bookmarks from a device that has Firefox installed. So if you use Firefox at home, but Firefox doesn't work on your mobile device or your mother doesn't happen to have Firefox installed on her computer, you can't easily access your bookmarks while at those places. There

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are several stand-alone programs that solve this problem by allowing you to synchronize bookmarks between browsers, but I have a better answer.

The best and easiest solution for synchronizing bookmarks and favorites is a free service from Google called Google Bookmarks. I have used Google Bookmarks for several years. This service keeps a copy of all your bookmarks securely in the cloud, so you can access them from any Internet-connected computer or tablet and most smart phones.

To use Google Bookmarks, you simply surf over to www.google.com/bookmarks. If you already have a Google account from using Gmail, Google Calendar or another Google service, you can just sign in and add Bookmarks to your account. If you don't have a Google account, you can sign up for the free Google account and activate Google Bookmarks right from this page.

When you add the Google Bookmarks to your Google Account you will be asked if you want to copy your current bookmarks or favorites from your web browser. You will want to do this, unless your bookmarks or favorites have become so unruly that you would like to start with a clean slate.

Once you have the Google Bookmarks set up, the easiest ways to access your new bookmarks is to install the Google Toolbar, which is a free download available at www.google.com/toolbar. You should install this toolbar on the computer that you use most often in the web browser that you usually use. For instance, if you use Internet Explorer on your home computer, installing the Google Toolbar there will give you quick access to your Google Bookmarks as well as some additional features.

If you are using another computer that has the Google Toolbar installed, you can simply log into your Google account to access your bookmarks on that computer. On computers and mobile devices that don't have the Google Toolbar, you can log into your Google account and access your bookmarks at www.google.com/bookmarks. Google also has a small icon that you can drag to the links bar of any browser to access your Google bookmarks. It is available on the same page. Just click "Add Bookmark" at your Google Bookmarks page and you will see a blue box marked "Google Bookmark" that can be added to your web browser toolbar.

The only difficult part about this whole process is remembering to use the Google toolbar or icon to create your bookmarks rather than using your browser bookmark icon. Once you get in the habit of doing that, you are good to go.

Using the Google Bookmarks offers two additional perks. First, their bookmark page is extremely well organized. If you have ever tried to delete, rename, or rearrange your bookmarks or favorites in Internet Explorer, Firefox, or any other web browser, you know that this can be a trying task. Google Bookmarks, however, makes it easy. Just surf over to the Google Bookmarks page. As long as you are logged in to Google, you will see all of your bookmarks and find that it is easy to work with them.

The second perk is that Google has recently introduces a feature called "Lists" to their bookmarks. This feature lets you create a list of websites that revolve around one topic. It is a great way to research a topic, plan a trip, or organize an event. You can share your lists with selected people if you need to collaborate on any project. Google will also give you suggestions that pertain to the items in your list and sometimes these are very useful. So if you decide to try Google Bookmarks, you may also want to try the list feature.

If you use multiple devices, Google Bookmarks will keep your bookmarks in sync. Although this may only be a small step in keeping your world organized, being in sync can give you a very good feeling.

Microsoft Security Essentials

By Brian K. Lewis, PhD, Member, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
April 2011 issue, The Monitor
www.spcug.org
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Over the years, ever since my first encounter with a computer virus in 1987, I have used a number of anti-virus applications along with firewall software. As the Internet grew in the late '90s I had to add anti-parasite software and other anti-malware applications to the protection arsenal. Some of this software was free; others were very expensive both to purchase and to maintain. Some used tremendous amounts of computer resources which slowed down the overall operation of the computer. The cost in money and/or resources wasn't necessarily directly related to the usefulness of the application. However such protection was probably a necessary evil to prevent problems on my computer from the “invaders” that existed then and now on the Internet.

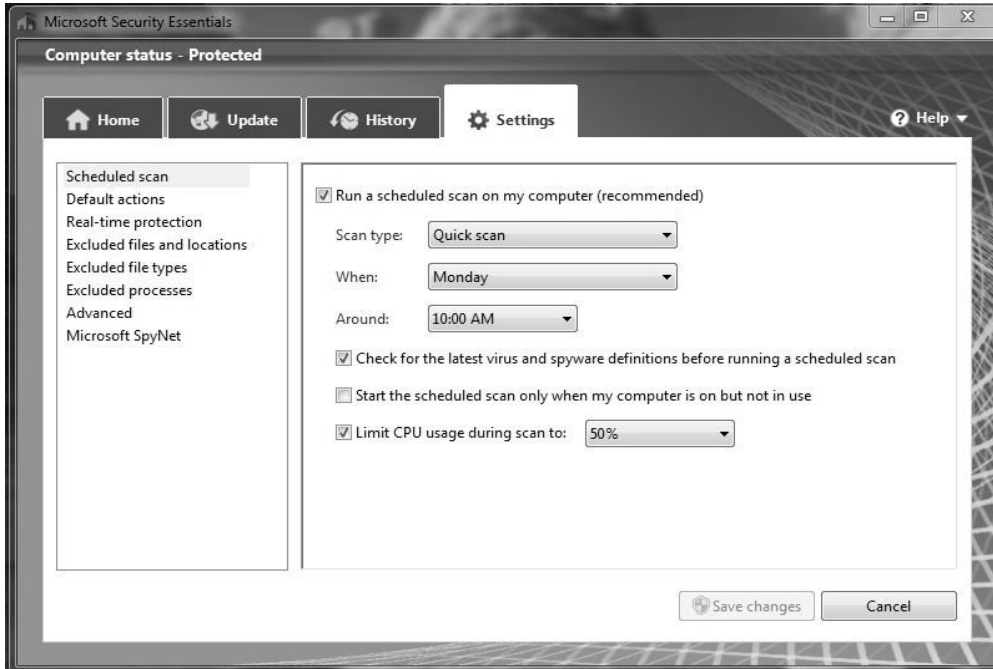
Most anti-malware applications seem to be growing in size as each manufacturer tries to “cover all the bases”. Unfortunately with the increase in size and coverage comes an increase in complexity. Now Microsoft has released an improved version of their Security Essentials (MSE) software that is easier for the user to install and operate. This application protects your computer against viruses, spyware, worms, trojans and other malicious software. In addition it is an easy to install FREE download from Microsoft. The only catch is that you must have a legal copy of Windows on your computer. The installation program does a check for Genuine Windows validation. The software runs on XP, Vista and Win 7 operating systems (OS). However, I have only been using it on Win7.

It does sound like it must be a resource hog to be able to carry out all of these functions. But the testing results I have seen show minimal effect on overall computer operation. Yes, there is reduction in the speed of processing web pages, e-mail, etc., when using the real-time protection. But compared to other software carrying out the same functions, the difference in speed is insignificant and really wouldn't be noticed by most users. The only place where MSE seems to fall down is on hard disk scans. There I have seen reports of initial complete scanning taking 8 – 24 hours! I have done both a Quick Scan and a Full scan of my hard drive, about 50 GB of data on a 140 GB partition. The Quick Scan was done in less than 2 minutes. The full scan took about 25 minutes. So from my perspective, on my system, the scanning time is not excessive. I have used other malware checkers that have taken over an hour to accomplish a complete scan on the same drive.

If you want to install this application, the first step is to download MSE from Microsoft's web site (http://www.microsoft.com/security_essentials/?mkt=en-us). This page has the download link for the msi file which can be run automatically after downloading by selecting “Run” instead of “Save”. If you have questions about the installation Microsoft has a video showing all the steps involved. Once the installation is complete the opening screen shows the current status of your protection and the date of the last update for the malware definitions. It also shows you the settings related to scanning your hard drive. From this page you can do a manual scan of your drive. The Update tab on the top of the page takes you to a page where you can manually update the malware definitions. MSE will automatically download updates when you are running Windows and are connected to the Internet. However, it may not occur immediately on connection. So if it has been some time since you connected to the Internet you may want to manually download the definitions.

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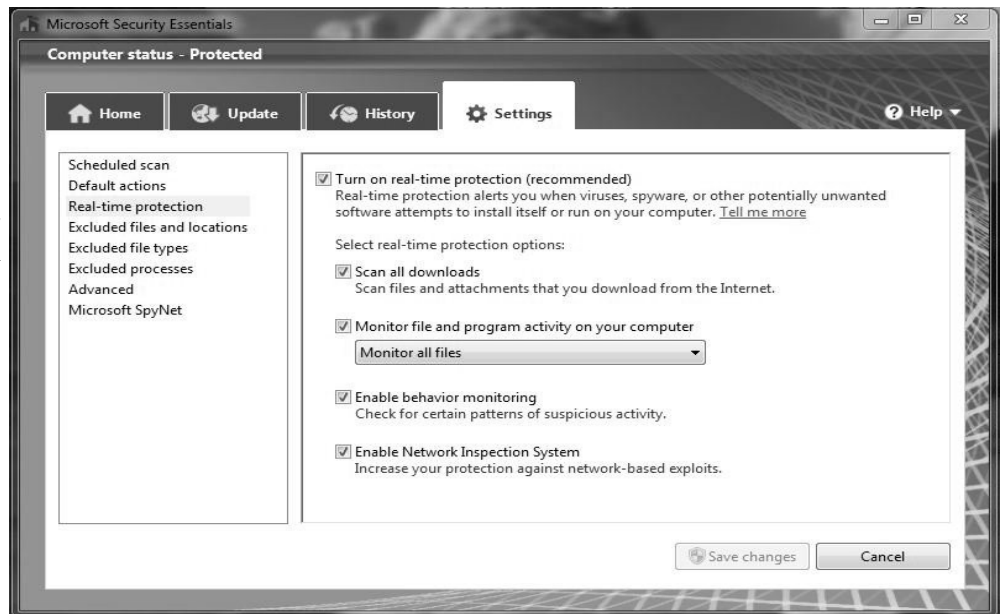


The settings page, shown in the next figure, is one where you can mostly accept the default values. One you will probably want to change is the timing of the automatic scan. MSE defaults to midnight on one day, Sunday I think. You will probably want to change this to a time when you know that your computer will be turned on.

The list on the left of the window shows the additional settings categories for MSE. The "default actions" relate to what should be done with any malware detected. The various categories of default actions run from low threat to severe. In all cases I have set mine to remove the malware. If in doubt as to the effect on

your computer, you can set the lower threat levels to be quarantined. If you wish to later remove a quarantined item, you can do so from the history page. Select "Quarantined items" and you will then be allowed to remove all or individual items. You can also select to restore an item, but this is not likely to be a good idea. Read the description of what the malware's actions are carefully before deciding to restore it.

This next figure shows you the protection being provided by MSE. In most cases it is best to leave the default settings so you will get the best protection. You will note the category for behavior monitoring. This allows MSE scan for possible malware that is not in its definitions list. This is referred to as the "heuristic" programming of the software. Any application that seems to be altering the functioning of the operating system, such as a rootkit, should be flagged by this function. This is the only way that any anti-malware application can attempt to stay ahead of the malware writers who are always coming up with new, more complex schemes for infiltrating your computer.



I hope you can see from this quick review of MSE, that it is designed to provide a simple user interface for a complete protection package. Now more tech-savvy computer users might want more control over their anti-malware protection, but for most users, I think this is a good fit and the price is right.

As I mentioned earlier, I have been running MSE under Windows 7. This is Microsoft's best operating system yet. I

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think this is demonstrated by the fact that the Win7 SP-1 has no really significant changes to the basic OS. Also, Win7 does seem to be more secure than earlier versions. So if you are still running Vista or WinXP, in my opinion, you should be seriously considering a change to Win7. At the very least, whatever OS you are running, be sure to practice “safe computing”.

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Cloud Computing

By Dick Maybach
n2nd (at) charter.net

Although you can hardly pick up a computer publication without being assaulted by references to *cloud computing*, the term has been abducted by marketing organizations to the extent that it means almost nothing. Today, “cloud” is to computing as “natural” is to food. Although the term means little, the concept is very valuable, and is something that most computer owners use every day. I define cloud computing as using storage or processing resources on the Internet. Most of us already use cloud computing far more than we realize; for example, every e-mail we receive sits on our ISP's disk until we download it to our PCs, and when we use Google Maps, much the processing and all of the storage occurs on Google's hardware. In the extreme, cloud computing could evolve to the point where our computer would consist of only a keyboard, mouse, display, and perhaps a printer, with just enough processing power and software to support a Web browser. Google foresaw this as the future of home computing and began developing their Chrome operating system to support it.

A simple example of cloud computing is a backup service, which continually backs up all your data whenever you are connected to the Internet. You don't have to think about it, and because your backups are stored at a different location, they are safe even in case of a local catastrophe. A similar use is synchronizing data among several computers, where the data might be files, contacts, and your favorite Web sites and (with care) their passwords. Many people also use the cloud to share information with others, for example by using Facebook for personal information, Flickr for photos, or Google Docs for documents. Cloud storage is both convenient and inexpensive; indeed, many vendors offer up to two gigabytes free.

All the above examples are data storage ones, but there are also cloud processing services, such as Google Docs. Google Docs supports the common office tasks such as word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations, which mean you can perform these without purchasing an office suite and having to keep it updated. It also allows on-line collaboration (where, for example, several people edit the same document), although few home users are likely to need this feature. Like cloud storage, cloud processing is inexpensive or even free.

By now, you may be thinking, “What's the Catch?” Somebody has to pay for these services, as providing them requires non-trivial costs for computer hardware, support staff, and communications. In some cases, the free service is a limited sample to entice you to purchase a more versatile one. In others, you are the product being sold. Your habits and preferences are valuable commodities that advertisers will pay to learn about. For many of us this is a fair trade; in return for the convenience of Google's search engine, we tolerate the ads in the sidebar and being directed to sites that want to sell to us.

However, there are some security and safety caveats involved. Security is complex for a cloud vendor; your data are stored on the same disks, the same memory, and pass through the same processors as everybody else's. The process

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is much like what happens in a commercial laundry or dry cleaner, where everybody's clothes are tagged and thrown together into a large machine. Afterwards, somebody looks at the tags to get them back to their proper owners. Contrast this to a bank deposit vault, where only your key can open the box where you place your documents. Even at such competent vendors as Google, there have been instances of data leaking from one customer to another, and many cloud vendors are start-ups who have much less expertise than Google. This means that you should take responsibility for safeguarding your data. For example, if you back up your disk in the cloud, encrypt any files (such as those containing passwords or on-line banking data) that present security risks. I store my passwords using KeePassX, <http://www.KEEPASSX.org/>. Its file is always encrypted on your PC's disk, and you can safely back it up anywhere. I also use Gnu Privacy Guard (gpg), <http://www.gnupg.org/>, to encrypt files and e-mail. (Both of these programs are available for the Windows, Mac, and Linux platforms.) By the way, when you encrypt a file, be sure that only the encrypted version is ever placed in a directory that is backed up in the cloud.

Safety also is not trivial. Vendors do go out of business and, even if they keep operating, they may find that providing cloud services isn't profitable. Not all of them back up their storage, which means that their hardware failures and software bugs can destroy your data. If you use the service for back-up or synchronization, this isn't a problem because the chances of simultaneous failures in the cloud and on your PC is negligible. However, if you store your only copy of your photograph or music collection in the cloud, you are risking disaster. In the case of cloud processing, you should also be concerned about the format in which your data is stored. It does little good to download the file containing your novel if it's stored in a format that only the (now out of business cloud vendor) could read.

Finally, cloud computing is new, so you should expect some glitches.

Don't Panic!

By Berry F. Phillips, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City
April 2011 issue, eMonitor
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I can almost imagine if Sherlock Holmes, my favorite fictional detective, had a computer in Victorian England, and he detected evil on his system what he would think. He would suspect a diabolical hacking by Dr. Moriarty. He would not panic but say calmly to Dr. Watson, "the game is afoot." Troubleshooting your computer is just like playing detective. There are certain steps that you can take before calling a computer tech and facing another horror story, the repair bill!

Panic control is to develop an objective detached mind of Sherlock Holmes as you begin your investigation of the evil in your computer. Sometimes breathing deeply helps. Sometimes getting up and doing something else and coming back to the problem helps. I find that often sleeping and coming back to the problem helps. Avoid getting too emotional and taking a hammer or some other weapon to attack your system remembering that computers are expensive, and you do have lots of data on your system. Here are some basic instructions:

1. Restart your computer. Often software problems will correct themselves when you do that.
2. Check to make sure everything is working. If not, check the connection to what is not working.
3. Check the electric power by plugging a lamp into the same power outlet that is connected to your computer to make sure the outlet is working.

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4. Make sure the computer and monitor are plugged in.
5. Disconnect peripheral devices and restart the computer.
6. Listen for unusual sounds. Is the cooling fan running? Is the hard drive making noises?
7. Look inside the computer for wires that aren't plugged in all the way or other faulty connections.
8. Start the computer from an external start-up disk, such as the system software CD that hopefully came with your computer.

Having said all that, I must confess that I have tried to save a buck being quite frugal and very Scottish only to make my problem even worse and of course more expensive for a tech (pro) to repair. If you do decide to call technical support, write down the exact problem and what you were doing when it occurred. Also note any error messages. Try to replicate the problem if you can. Be as specific as possible when talking to the support person. Computers can crash or hang when their hard disk become too full.

Free up space by deleting unnecessary files and emptying the Trash or Recycle Bin.

Don't shock yourself or your RAM. When working inside the computer, turn the power off but leave the electrical cord plugged into the surge suppressor. Ground yourself by touching the casing of the power supply before touching any of the computer circuits. You can also wear a grounding strap which is very inexpensive. Every computer user should have a small computer tool kit.

I do not recommend the medical option of taking panic pills for computer ills. I do recommend joining the Computer Club of Oklahoma City where we share with each other our positive as well as negative computer experiences. Knowledge is the real cure for panic in computing.

The motto of our computer club for years is: "The only stupid question is the one not asked!"

I wonder if I can get Sherlock Holmes as a guest speaker for the computer club. Do you think I may have become a bit eccentric as a fan of the world's greatest detective? Where did I leave my smoking jacket and calabash pipe? I will have to ask Dr. Watson or Mrs. Hudson!



July 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 1 PM Photo Editing Workshop	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 2 pm Board Mtg	14	15	16 10 am Investment SIG
17	18 6 pm Q & A Session Followed by General Mtg	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 1 pm Photography Club Mtg	29	30
31						

PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP, INC.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Return this application, with check for annual dues (\$25 family, \$20 individual, \$10 student membership) payable to "PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP." Return to the club Treasurer during our meeting or mail to PPCUG Treasurer. P.O. Box 3787, Crossville, TN 38557.

Date

Last Name First Name Family Members (if family membership)

Address: City State Zip Code Phone Number

E-Mail address

I have used PCs since (year): I have belonged to a Computer Club before. Yes No

I have knowledge in the following areas and would be willing to share my knowledge with club members:
