



PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP, INC GAZETTE



May 2011

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May 2011

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

Volume 17, Issue 5

This Month’s Meetings

May 6 at 1 p.m.
At FFG Community Church
Photo Editing Workshop

May 16 at 6 p.m.
At 127 S. Senior Center
General Meeting

May 21 at 10 a.m.
At 127 S. Senior Center
Investment SIG

May 26 at 1 p.m.
At FFG Community Church
Photography Club

Attention All Members

There is a dire need for volunteers to fill our officer slots and at least two Directors by the May meeting. (We voted to extend the nominating period to the May meeting). In this notice we need to point out that if we do not get a sufficient number of officers and directors, we will have to suspend operations of the club. It is very important that members attend the May meeting and meet any candidates.

Elections will be at the June meeting. If we do not have sufficient officers elected at the June meeting, there will be decisions made at the June meeting about the future operations of the organization and therefore it is important to attend that meeting to participate in making those decisions.

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May Program

CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE AND INVESTOR EDUCATION ISSUES

Back for reasons somewhat less awe-inspiring than popular demand Bob Mohar, president of the Crossville Area Investment Club (CAIC), will provide our May presentation. For an accumulation of \$16 million in US debt Bob will discuss the CAIC, how it operates, its members and the club's focus-investor education.

Drawing upon the past six years of investment club educational sessions topics to be highlighted, during the rather disjointed presentation, will include: the current investment climate; the evolutionary economic changes soon forthcoming; investment themes to provide a focus for your investment consideration; and an answer to Carl's (our PPCUG President) question why gasoline is so expensive.

This presentation is almost guaranteed to be controversial yet thought provoking and possibly sad yet humorous. Truly a don't miss opportunity. Support your computer club volunteer to be an officer.

“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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Pleasant Hill	Dick Riesz	(931) 277-5642
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 **June 20, 2011 at 6:00 P. M. at**
127 S. SENIOR CENTER

Roger Coulter Will present a program on photography

Classes

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

Cool Site

<https://www.dropbox.com/>

Dropbox is a free service that lets you access your data from anywhere using multiple devices and platforms. You can share files with anyone or between multiple computers of your own. Place files you wish to share in a Dropbox folder, invite them to share and it is like storing the files directly to their computers. You see changes on other people's computer instantly. Your data is safe. All files stored in Dropbox are encrypted (AES-256).

You can use Dropbox to back up files and retrieve them from anywhere. It works in Windows, Mac, and Linux, the Dropbox secure website or your Smartphone. It also works with Facebook and Twitter.

The software and the service are free with 2GB of storage. 50GB is \$9.99 per month; 100 GB is \$19.99 per 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

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 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 April 18, 2011 General Meeting Minutes

Question and Answer period began at 6 PM with Carl Nordeen and Alan Baker taking questions from the audience. Carl would demonstrate on his computer by using the screen with an overhead projector. Many questions were ones that Carl could answer and demonstrate at the same time. A free program "Bel Arc" lets you know key #'s for programs you have installed on your computer which you can furnish to the company when you need to contact them for help with that program or need a driver. Often audience members can add some information from their own experiences.

Business Meeting was conducted by Alan Baker and the board meeting highlights were shared with 37 members and one guest. Club's account has \$5400.54 and membership is currently 141. Alan mentioned that Pleasant Hill has not had any activity in their program and may be closing as a satellite site. Photography SIG and Investing SIG is going well.

Applications for scholarships were only received from Cumberland County High and six applicants will be interviewed from CCHS and two \$600 Scholarships will be awarded. We will still be accepting nominations for board positions during the May meeting and in June if no nominations for at least minimal officers of President, Treasurer, and Secretary per the club's charter and LLC license, the club would be closing and membership advised of the steps to be taken.

Bob Willis, an AARP Tax Aide Guide and Board member showed two security scans everyone can do on their computer which are free on line:

1. Norton Security Scan requires Active X activated and the demonstrated scan took only a few moments.
2. Secunia's (OSI) Online Software Inspector needs Sun Java installed –link provided on the demonstrated security scan window by Norton Security Scan.

Other tips were shared by Bob: 7 ZIP is free software that can compress files and you can encrypt with free True Crypt. Revo Uninstaller is also free and completely removes pieces of uninstalled files. Recuva is good for file recovery. He also recommends using CCleaner once a week to remove temporary cookies that can slow your computer. All of the PowerPoint slideshow as well as handouts for the security scanning programs will be posted on PPCUG's website along with a handout for useful free software. Door prizes for members attending was by a random choice program installed on the club's computer. The prizes of 2 GB flash drives were awarded to Glenn Thomas and Mary Jane Gradle.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Joan Carroll, PPCUG Secretary

Digital Asset Management Software

By Mike Morris, Editor, Front Range PC Users Group, CO
February 2011 issue, k-Byte™newsletter
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What is interesting to me is that many of today's digital imaging software applications offer both image editing and what is called "Digital Asset Management" (DAM) capabilities.

In the not-so-distant past, the only image software choice was which image editor to use (Photoshop or something

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else). But with the “explosion” of digital camera use, keeping track of all the images (and protecting intellectual property rights) has clearly become a significant issue. While this is certainly an issue especially for professional photographers, with digital cameras, even the most casual photographer will soon find hundreds, if not thousands of photos on their computer.

Perhaps you are thinking, as you read this, that you don’t need image management of any kind, because your digital camera provides all the necessary information.

Actually, that is NOT the case. The camera provides information about camera settings (including date and time of the photo). But not included in that data is information such as the event (e.g., parent’s 50th wedding anniversary), or the names of the people in the photo. Yes, you may have an excellent memory, but your children and grandchildren probably won’t remember or know the names of all the people in the photos of those special events (I can verify that from personal experience).

That is why image management software is so helpful—it allows you to capture that information. You have a wide range of software choices for this application:

DigiKam (<http://www.digikam.org/>), an image management application claimed to be designed by photographers, and is open source and therefore free. This application offers both DAM and image editing capabilities (which are significant, although not equivalent to the editing features of Photoshop or GIMP). For Windows users, you can download the Windows version from download (<http://bit.ly/hWfFrt>).

DigitalPro (<http://bit.ly/faHwgJ>), also claimed to be designed by photographers, and is proprietary (\$179). This application is primarily for image management (and primarily for professional or advanced amateur photographers), not image editing.

Bibble Labs (<http://bibblelabs.com/>) Pro (and Lite). This proprietary application (\$199.95) offers both editing and DAM features. One major claim on their website is that this application is faster than any other. For a list of editing tools this application provides, connect to features (<http://bit.ly/82JzsV>).

Adobe CS3 (and later) applications. The Adobe Bridge program is bundled with the CSx (the latest release is CS5) series of Adobe products. In my case, I received it when I purchased Adobe InDesign CS3. Adobe Bridge brings DAM features to the Adobe products, all of which, as I am sure you know, are very expensive applications (full retail price for Photoshop CS5 is \$699). They are, however, designed for professional/business use, originally commercial printing, but now expanded into electronic publishing as well. The Adobe products (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign among others), despite the many competitors, are still considered industry “standards.” For more information on these products, connect to Adobe (<http://www.adobe.com>).

Adobe Lightroom. From Wikipedia (<http://bit.ly/3wnGqF>) is this description: Lightroom is an application “...designed to assist professional photographers in managing thousands of digital images and doing post production work. It is not a file browser like Adobe Bridge, but rather an image management application database which helps in viewing, editing, and managing digital photos, the same way photographers used to do in the non-digital world.” Connect to Lightroom (<http://adobe.ly/6dBlz>) for a list of features. Full retail price is \$299.

For the casual computer user/casual photographer, there is Google Picasa (<http://picasa.google.com/>). It offers simple image organizing features and a few simple editing features. It is free, and “automatic.” After you download and install the program, it will, when you first launch it, catalog virtually all the images (with a few minor exceptions) on your computer.

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Most, if not all major camera makers provide some software with their cameras that include some basic image organization and image editing features.

There are many other choices, some of which you can find in the Wikipedia comparisons at: image viewers (<http://bit.ly/asWUi>), image organizers (<http://bit.ly/CNnwr>), and graphics editors (<http://bit.ly/10xtOU>).

I ended up with Adobe Bridge “by default.” Since I make no claim to being a professional photographer, or even (yet) a knowledgeable amateur, I would very probably have picked a free application (such as DigiKam) for “Digital Asset Management” if I didn’t already have Bridge.

For me, Picasa does not have enough features. However, I expect it will be sufficient for many digital camera users.

I have not tried to compare in detail either editing features or DAM capabilities of these programs. I have, however, scanned through the DigiKam manual (<http://bit.ly/hZaFX9>). My conclusion is that if you download and install DigiKam and GIMP, you will have a very powerful, very feature-rich set of image editing and image management tools.

Thanks to FRPCUG member Bert Broekstra for his comments on DigiKam, and for finding the DigiKam PDF manual link.

Service Packs Explained (and needed)

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS
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Although most of us still think of Windows 7 as a brand new operating system, it is, in fact, starting to show its age. Windows 7 made its debut on October 22, 2009. Is one and one-half really old? Well, in the computer world, it is not old, but it is certainly full-grown. One sign of this is that Microsoft has just released the first Service Pack for Windows 7.

A service pack is a collection of updates, bug fixes, and enhancements for a software program. As you know, Microsoft routinely offers updates for their Windows operating systems. These updates come out weekly and they patch or you might say, repair the operating system so that they remain safe from hackers. They can also include improvements or enhancements to the operating system. At a certain point in time, Microsoft gathers all of those updates, adds any other updates and enhancements they have and issues this batch of updates as a service pack. It is also important to note, that when Microsoft issues a service pack, this service pack also makes sure that all of the updates and enhancements work well together and offer good stability for the operating system.

The question that I am most often asked is this, "If I have installed every update that Microsoft has released, do I still need to install the service pack?" The answer is "yes." Often the service pack contains additional updates and/or enhancements that were not included in the weekly updates. Also, a service pack makes sure that all of the updates are put together properly to make your system run well.

In fact, Microsoft thinks that this is so important that they only support the operating system when it has the proper service packs installed. Each service pack should be installed when it is released. If for some reason, they are in-

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stalled all at the same time, each is installed sequentially.

So, for Windows XP you should have Service Pack 3 installed. Windows Vista should have Service Pack 2, and Windows 7 should have Service Pack 1. To learn what service pack you have installed, just click on the Start button, right-click on Computer or My Computer, and then click Properties. You will see the service pack listed under the Windows edition.

You can go to the Microsoft website and install a service pack from there, if you happen to be missing one. All service packs from Microsoft are free. If you are using Window 7, the new service pack will be offered to you through Microsoft's automatic update service. This Windows 7 service pack can take up to 30 minutes and will re-boot your computer. I have installed Window 7, Service Pack 1 on several computers without a problem, but you should be aware that installing a service pack is a big update. Microsoft recommends that you back up your computer before installing a service pack. And to be honest, you should be backing up your computer anyway. So if you don't have a backup strategy in place, this is a good time to implement one.

The newest version of Internet Explorer - IE 9 is now in testing and it is already available for free download in a beta version. This is by far, the best version of Internet Explorer that Microsoft has ever released. IE 9 won't run on Windows XP; it requires Windows Vista or Windows 7. Although Microsoft is not requiring Windows 7 Service Release 1 to install IE 9, it is advisable to install this Service Release before you install IE 9.

Service Packs are a fact of life for Windows users. Installing them may be a bit of a pain, but you really need them to make sure that your Windows system is secure and stable and that it performs well.

SmartPhone = PDA + Phone, Part 1

By Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL
January 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor
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Smartphones can be seen all around. Notice the phone being used on your favorite TV show; next time, odds are that it'll be a smartphone. A year or two ago it was a flip phone (do you remember Jack Bauer on 24 using his?), but no more. Now the phone of choice seems to be the smartphone. Apple, and more recently, Google, have really changed the mobile phone landscape. The iPhone, with its iOS Operating System available only on the iPhone, released in 2009, really started the whole movement. Google, with its Android Operating System (provided for free to hardware phone manufacturers), has come on very strong in the past few months so that iPhones and Android phones now have about the same market share - about 35% each, which only leaves 30% to be shared by Blackberry, Nokia, and Microsoft.

The Smartphone equality, as stated in the title, suggests that the smartphone is equal, in functionality anyway, to a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) and a standard mobile phone. PDAs have been a popular way of allowing one to have many of the computer files, pictures, videos and music, available on the go - remember the Palm Pilot. A phone was another necessity for someone who was always on the go. So for someone who had to be mobile and needed access their computer files, a phone and a PDA became a good combination. I carried a PDA for many years and more recently, a PDA and a flip phone. Now I can carry only one device, a smartphone. And, as a welcome side effect, now I only have to make sure one device is charged nightly.

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The smartphone is made possible by a number of technologies. Among them are: Capacitive touch-screens; 3G (soon to be 4G) wireless telephone networks; Wi-Fi; GPS; Micro-miniature processors, memory and components; Digital Cameras; and Phone oriented Operating Systems. Some of these technologies are used in phones - like touch screens, networks, small components, digital cameras, and operating systems. And some are used in PDAs - like touch screens, Wi-Fi, small components, and operating systems. As you can see there is a good bit of overlap, so putting it all together was just a natural. But it took the genius of Apple to put it all together and make it work and make it practical and make it cool. And now with the help of Google it has become more practical and popular.

All of the technology for replacing the mobile phone and the PDA is included in the smartphone, and then some. (I didn't have a good camera in my mobile phone, before.) But, it does take some planning and forethought to make the smartphone do everything. Some of the things to be concerned with are: Contacts, (which are phone numbers, addresses, e-mail addresses, and related notes); Calendar events; E-mail; Memos, (which are lists of important things); Documents; Spreadsheets; Pictures, Videos, Music; and Browsers. Before you can consider using any of these things there has to be an "App" (Application) installed on your smartphone. (I am using a Motorola Droid2 as an example, but most of what I am referring to will be very similar on another Android smartphone, and even similar for an Apple iPhone.) There are Apps for all of these tasks. In fact there are over 100,000 Apps for Android phones and over 240,000 Apps for iPhones.

So, the first thing to do is to identify an App to handle each task you want accomplished. Your smartphone probably came with a basic collection of Apps. Basic things like Contacts, Pictures, Videos, Music, and Camera will probably be covered by these Apps that were installed at the factory. If not, you can go to the "Market" for Android Apps, or the Apple Store for iPhone Apps, and find one that fits your needs. Many of the Apps at these stores (websites) are free or have a nominal cost, most under \$10. Things like Word or PDF Documents, or Excel spreadsheets may have to be handled by an App from one of these stores. Once you get to the App store, you will find a myriad of App titles. You can typically search for "All Apps", or limit your search to only free ones. You can even search for Games that will run on your smartphone. When you find an App that you want, you will pay for it (via a credit card account that was previously set up) if it is not free, and then it will be downloaded right onto your smartphone. The download is completely controlled from the Market and there is no further action on your part needed. After the App is downloaded and installed, you will receive a message that it is complete. It couldn't be any easier.

Once an App has been downloaded, it can be placed on the home screen. Actually, one of the home screens. The Droid2 has 7 home screens. 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.

Once you've organized your home screens and downloaded the Apps needed, I'm sure you'll see that the smartphone is a very useful device for someone on the go. Future articles will concentrate on some of the new ways of interacting with the touch sensitive more interesting features, but I think PDA + (not so smart) phone.

screen and some of the smartphone's you will now agree that: Smartphone =



Powermat

By George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society, AZ
March 2011 issue, TCS eJournal
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You probably carry at least one portable device, a mobile phone. To keep it charged, you need a charger for a home outlet or one for the car. When you travel, either locally or away from home, you must remember to carry one or both of these chargers. It's cumbersome, but that's the price of a mobile device.

Or maybe not! Powermat has a solution for any of your mobile devices, and it doesn't require a charging cord. How do they do this? You charge a Powermat unit, then carry it with you wherever you might be.

Just set your mobile device on one of the panels of the Powermat and your device is charged wirelessly by induction. What does that mean? You don't need to know. It just works.

I received a Powermat for evaluation. It is a small 3" X 3" tri-fold device. It unfolds into three connected panels, two of which are charging panels. The third section is the storage battery that allows the device to be used wirelessly.

You first charge the Powermat with a wall outlet. Then fit your mobile phone or other device with a receiver tailored for your specific type of device. Then simply place the mobile device on the Powermat. You'll hear a beep to indicate that connection is made and that your mobile device is charging. Another beep sounds when your device is removed.

The tri-fold Powermat I received is one of several styles available. Some are smaller, some come with a Power Cube, a unit that connects to your mobile device and is what is placed on the Powermat.

I tried out my wife's Blackberry on the Powermat. The unit comes with a Power Cube which you connect to the Blackberry, then place it on the Powermat to charge. The Power Cube is about one and a half inches square and has a white, smooth surface.

One corner of it has a wire attached with a connector with adaptable heads for almost any receptacle available today.

The wire fits neatly into a groove around the edge of the Power Cube when not in use.

I also received a receiver for my iPhone. A receiver is a shell into which the iPhone fits. It has a compatible plug in its base and a unit on its back similar in function to a Power in function to a Power Cube. Once the iPhone is in the receiver, you need only place it on the Powermat to charge it.

Powermat announced at CES an agreement that will provide wireless charging capabilities in airports, through the installation of Powermat units in terminal seating. Airports are difficult environments in which to obtain recharges. This solution will benefit the many travelers with mobile devices that need charging in an airport. In addition, Powermat will be working with GM to incorporate in their cars, starting with the Chevy Volt, a charging solution for most mobile devices, without the use of wires.

About: Powermat

Vendor: Powermat

www.powermat.com

Price: tri-fold \$130, receiver \$40

eBook Readers Compared

By Constance Brown, President, Canton/Alliance/Massillon User Group, Ohio
February 2011 issue, The Memory Map
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Technology with new capabilities and applications is constantly available. It can be difficult to stay focused on what will be most suitable for our requirements when we are constantly wowed by the latest innovations. Suppose you wish to read eBooks and listen to music. How many pieces of equipment will allow you to do this? Here are a few: computer, web book, a variety of phones, iPad, some mp3 players, some GPS devices and some eBook readers.

The cross application of many of these devices is amazing and sometimes confusing. In January we heard a presentation from the Stark County District Library about eBooks and eAudio books and were introduced to a variety of devices that can be used to check out these Books. The library has a links to lists of compatible and incompatible devices at <http://www.overdrive.com/Resources/DRC/Default.aspx>.

During the presentation, I became interested in the comparison between Apple's iPad and Barnes and Nobles Nookcolor. Both of them have one disadvantage when compared to other readers such as other Nook products, Sony, Kobo or Kindle: the screen is not E Ink or E Paper.

That means the battery is being drained when it is in use and that it will be more tiring to the eyes and perhaps impossible to read in bright light. However, Nookcolor lets you read books and a magazine in full color and works both in Wi-Fi and 3G networks. It has 8 Gig of internal memory, enough to hold 6,000 books, and is expandable to 32 Gig. Over 2 million book titles are available, and it has internal support for Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

Additional features include resizable text and graphics with AliveTouch™, audio, Read to Me, Keep your last page, read between devices, LendMe™ technology, borrowing, and you can share updates on Social sites like Facebook® and Twitter®. It runs with the Android™ Operating System. The price tag is \$249. More information is available at <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/nook/index.asp>. Here the comparison stops. Nookcolor was not designed for Internet browsing or communicating via email.

Apple's iPad comes with 16 Gig to 64 Gig of internal memory. Some iPads are Wi-Fi only and others are either 3G or Wi-Fi. The price tag varies from \$499-\$829. The iPad is much more than an eBook reader. It offers Internet access and applications. It is still awaiting an app to be released that will let the reader view eBooks full screen. You can page through websites, write an email, flick through photos, or watch a movie with just the touch of a finger. The 3G data plan is through ATT and starts at \$14.99 per month. It has many computer capabilities, especially when it comes to browsing the Internet and reading email.

When it comes to comparing eBook readers that use E ink and E paper, it is a bit more difficult to make a selection. The Kindle is great, but doesn't allow for you to check out eBooks from the library at this time. Kobo from Borders does not allow you to listen to EAudio and requires that books be loaded from a computer. Sony and Nook have their own trade-offs with weight, bulkiness, and a screen that is sometimes difficult to read in sunlight in the case of the Sony. So if an E Reader is in your future, you will have to select what best meets your needs. Having an eReader certainly beats having to carry heavy, bulky books through the airport in order to satiate your reading appetite as you wait for your next flight!

Understanding System Restore

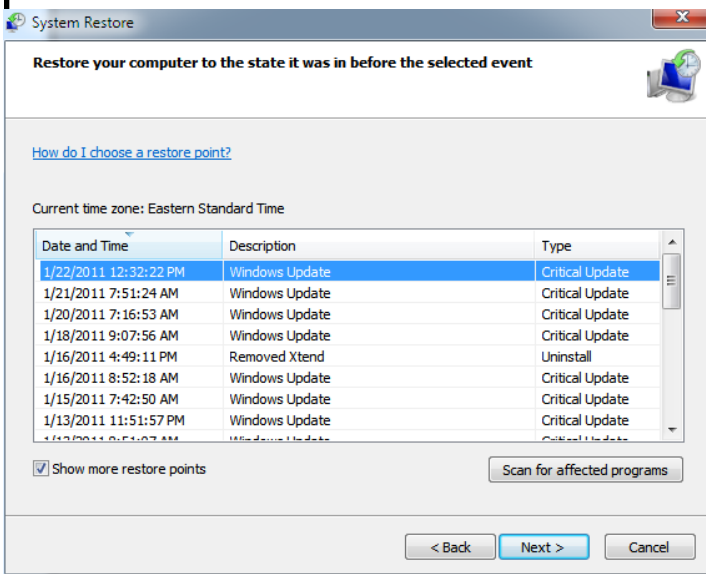
By Vinny La Bash, Regular Contributing Columnist, Sarasota PCUG, Inc., FL
March 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor
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Windows 7 has a new and improved version of System Restore that is far superior to the lame utility that came with XP. Setting a restore point was often painfully slow, and it rarely worked as it should have. Windows 7 System Restore easily helps you bring back your computer's system files to an earlier point in time. It's a way to undo system changes to your computer without affecting your personal files, such as e-mail, documents, or photos.

Sometimes, the installation of a program or a driver can cause an unexpected change to your computer or cause Windows to behave unpredictably. Usually, uninstalling the program or driver corrects the problem. If uninstalling does not fix the problem, you can try restoring your computer's system to an earlier date when everything worked correctly.

System Restore uses a feature called System Protection to regularly create and save restore points on your computer. These restore points contain information about registry settings and other system information that Windows uses. You can also create restore points manually.

System Restore is not intended for backing up personal files, so it cannot help you recover a photograph or video that has been deleted or damaged. You should regularly back up your personal files and important data using a backup program. Windows 7 has an excellent built-in backup utility. Windows 7 uses the Shadow Copy feature, introduced in Vista. It's vastly superior to the process in XP and earlier versions of Windows. The old way used a simple file filter and copied files around the system which was clumsy compared to the Shadow Copy method. Today, Windows creates a snapshot of your drive which can later be used to restore your system should catastrophe occur.



Additional capabilities of Shadow copy include taking snapshots of files even when currently in use. Microsoft has incorporated this feature into Previous Versions which allows restoring a previous version of an application. Unfortunately, this power is available only in Windows Professional or Ultimate.

The easiest way to bring up System Restore is to type System in the Start menu search box and select it from the resulting list. Another way is to select the Recovery option from Control Panel, or you can simply type **rstrui** in the search box.

Whatever method you choose will bring up the System Restore dialog box that gives you some helpful information. Select the Next button to get a list of restore points. Most of the time you will be using the most recent restore point to get your system working again.

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Focus your attention on the Description list. This can give you an important indication of what went wrong. Did your problem begin after installing a Critical Update, a backup operation, or a new freeware program that you couldn't resist?

When you apply System Restore the system creates another restore point so you can undo the change if your problem isn't fixed. You can't undo System Restore however, if you use it in safe mode. But you can run System Restore again and select a different restore point.

Restore points are saved until the disk space Windows allocates to the utility is used up. Then the oldest restore points are deleted as new ones are needed. The easiest way to delete all previous restore points is to turn System Restore off, and then turn it back on again. Don't worry about running out of space.

Many computer problems can be traced to sloppy programs written by people who don't know enough about proper programming techniques to get their utilities published by reliable vendors. It's surprising how many problems are generated by faulty uninstall tools. There are many sound freeware offerings out in cyberspace, but don't use them unless they come tested and approved by a trusted source like Smart Computing. :

Updates! Updates! Updates!

By Penny Cano, Member and Instructor for the Dumb & Dumber Workshops – Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA March 2011 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News

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“Something popped up on my computer saying I needed an update. I didn't know if it was OK, so I didn't do it.” Does this sound familiar? Updates are one of the most important things you can do for your computer. So what needs updating? The answer is almost all the software on your computer. Updates patch security holes that allow access to your computer from outside and correct defects in software programs.

First and foremost is Windows itself. Patches fix security vulnerabilities and program flaws in the Operating System. Most people choose Automatic Updates, which downloads and installs these “fixes” for Windows without them having to worry about it. But Windows is not the only Microsoft program that needs updating. An option you can choose in Microsoft Update allows it to also take care of Microsoft Office suite, Microsoft Works, Windows Live, Silverlight, and a whole host of other Microsoft products installed on your computer that also need updating.

Of equal importance are updates for your Virus/Spyware program or Internet Security suite.

Don't know which one you're using? It's time you found out!! Double click on the icon in the lower right hand corner of the screen and when the program opens look for the date of the latest definition/update. It should be no later than yesterday. The virus program can only remove the “bad stuff” if it can recognize it, and it gets those descriptions in the definitions downloaded from the Internet.

Now what else needs updating? Java, Flashplayer, and Shockwave are three programs that deal with animation on websites. Adobe Reader occasionally has newer versions, but there are updates for the older versions if you prefer to keep them instead of upgrading. Do you have RealPlayer, Quick Time, or iTunes on your computer? Yes, they need updating too. Alternative browsers like Firefox, Chrome, and Safari are on the list. Add e-mail programs like Mozilla Thunderbird and Incredimail. Printer software, Support software from your computer manufacturer like HP Advisor and Dell Support Center, graphics programs like Photoshop....the list is endless.

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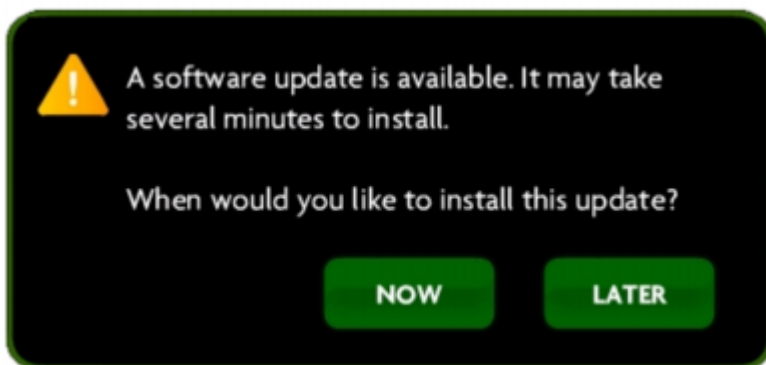
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So how do you determine which update requests to allow? One way is to open the Control Panel and choose “Add Remove Programs” in XP or “Programs and Features” in Vista and Windows 7. Become familiar with the list of programs installed on the computer. (If you can't remember all of them, at least you have a preference.) If one of these programs requests an update (a popup or notification in the lower right hand corner of the screen), the answer is “Yes, thank you for keeping me current.”

Some of the programs aren't so accommodating. Many can be manually updated by choosing “Check for Updates” under “Help” on the program's menu. There may also be a choice under “Options” (Settings, Properties, or some such wording) to automate the process.

There is a website that can help you decide. [Http://secunia.com](http://secunia.com) has an online scanner (use “Scan now” in the upper right corner, “Start Scanner” on the next page, and check “Enable thorough system inspection” on the next page before you hit “Start”) that will look at your system and list insecure programs. You can also download Secunia Personal Software Inspector (PSI) free for home users.

<http://filehippo.com> is a source for many of the freeware and shareware programs we use (Adobe Reader, iTunes, Firefox, Open Office, AVG Antivirus, etc). You can download their free Update Checker which will also help keep you up to date with the latest versions of that type of software.



“The technician set up my laptop, now what do I do?”

By Gregory West, Member of the Computer Operators of Marysville and Port Huron, MI, and Sarnia Computer User Group, Canada

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Ah, the wonderment of getting a new computer. No more having to watch others show off their computer skills as they demonstrate their new digital slide show, or listen about how they talk with relatives across three oceans for hours at no cost. With your new computer you are ready to join the online communities around the globe.

Three gigabytes of random access memory, 500 gigs of hard drive, a one year subscription to some antivirus / malware protection software utility and you are “good to go,” says the clerk in the computer store.

“But does it come with a manual,” you ask?

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“The manual is in the OS software,” the clerk says as he gets you to sign his copy of the credit card slip. “Have a nice day,” he hollers as you lug the computer through the doors towards home.

“Ya right,” you mutter under your breath

So many choices, too many decisions, but at least you finally got it home. Once you open the lid and go to turn on the new computer you realize that you have no idea what you are doing. In fact, you don’t know a gigabyte from a Tyrannosaurus Rex, and you couldn’t care less. All you want is to go on the Internet and check your email, surf some websites and maybe learn how to get those 265 photos from your digital camera.

“So now what,” you say aloud to yourself? “Where do I begin,” you ask your dog in desperation as she gives you that puzzled look.

There is an easy way to learn the various computer functions you need to catch up with your computer geek of a neighbor. First, you can take a formal course at your local college. These courses usually range from beginner to advanced. You can also take online courses (courses offered over the Internet), but this takes a special skill, as many people are not used to working alone and need to get out into a classroom set up with real humans. You can also join a local computer group. Here you will find people with similar interests who provide various seminars on tech-related issues.

I have been on a computer since 1972 where an IBM System/360 Operating System was the popular system in data processing centers. Over the years I have received computer training from all methods mentioned about. In fact, today I am taking two computer courses from books that came with DVD training programs

However, if you simply need to know one certain function on the computer, learn a software program, or how to troubleshoot a problem in your computer, I suggest Google’s YouTube videos. Computer instructors, tech companies, libraries, schools and many knowledgeable individuals upload training videos to YouTube. Here you not only get free training, but targeted training. For instance, if you need to know how to install a USB flash drive in Windows 7, you simply go to youtube.com on the Internet and there will be many videos to help you through this process.

One tip for searching within YouTube for help, try using the term: “tutorials” with your search. Sometimes this will give you a full training course on the particular subject you are interested in learning. I use YouTube all the time when I need help with a particular computer program. But it doesn’t stop there either. I wanted to learn how to winterize my RV and save the hundred dollar fee, so I searched for videos on YouTube and have winterized my own trailer ever since for only the cost of antifreeze

Gregory West is a Mac Instructor for Lambton College. He is also Webmaster at Central United Church, the home of Sarnia’s new Community Computer Training Centre at: <http://goo.gl/76H15>. This is free and open to the public as a community service. Learn at your own speed.

Cell Phone Lingo

By Wil Wakely, President, Seniors Computer Group, CA

March 2011 issue, Bits and Bytes, The Official Electronic Newsletter of the Seniors Computer Group

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When it's time to buy or upgrade to a new cell phone, are you as confused as I am with all the fancy terms and acronyms in the sales pitch? They make my head spin. Some of the terms you will encounter refer to the technology generation of the phone, as in G0 to G5. About every 10 years the next larger G (generation) number appears denoting a major improvement in cell phone technology. Each generation improves the speed, security, power usage, range and reliability of cell phones.

G0 refers to the original mobile telephone, a large unit stored in the car trunk with a hand-set between the driver and passenger seat. Remember those? Essentially it was a souped-up short-wave radio. These first made the scene via Motorola and Bell Telephone in the 50's.

Next came G1 using GSM tech (see below) which also was analog, first introduced in Japan in 1979 and later in the USA in 1983. In 1992, G2 was a major improvement using digital technology vs. analog that was used in G1. So what's the difference? Analog is a continuous smooth signal like whistling a tune. Digital rapidly samples the song and converts each small time segment into a series of ones and zeros, or digits. Through some clever complex calculations, these digits are converted back to the original sound tone and volume. The advantages of digital are that the data can be compressed and encoded for security and no information is lost as long as the 1/0 signal can be detected, even from a lot of accompanying noise.

In 2001, 3G was introduced using a new technology called CDMA (code division multiple access) developed by our local Qualcomm company. This is a very complex encoding that allows many more users on the same channel at the same time. G3 is probably the most common system in use today.

G4 arrived in 2006 and allows 1 Gbt/s (one gigabit per second) downloads from a fixed location or 100 mbt/s (megabits per second) from a moving vehicle. These high speeds allow streaming high-definition video (HD movies) on your cell phone. Also, connections to the Internet are faster and better. G5 is still in the lab and promises even more features, but may not arrive before 2020.

The cell phone field is rampant with 3, 4, and 5 letter acronyms. Here are a few that a salesman may try to impress you with:

GMS (global mobile system): still widely used in older phones.

TDMA (time domain multiple access): sharing the airwave in small time slots.

FDMA (frequency domain multiple access): sharing the airwave in different frequencies.

CDMA (see above).

An analogy to the problem of multiple access is a room (channel) in which people wish to talk to each other simultaneously. To avoid confusion, people could take turns speaking (time division), speak at different pitches (frequency division), or speak in different languages (code division). Other terms you may encounter are LTE (long term evolution), OTDMA (orthogonal TDMA) and WiMax (similar to WiFi). These are fancy names for some of the latest improvements in the field. So the best strategy for buying a new cell phone is to read the reviews and then find a salesman you can trust. Some of the above information may help you understand his pitch and also impress him with your knowledge.



June 2011

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

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:
