



PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP, INC GAZETTE



September 2011

Published by the Plateau PC Users Group, Inc. P.O. Box 3787, Crossville TN 38557-3787 www.PPCUGinc.com

September 2011

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

Volume 17, Issue 9

This Month’s Meetings

September 2 at 1 p.m.
At FFG Community Church
Photo Editing Workshop

September 19 at 3 p.m.
At 127 S. Senior Center
General Meeting

September 17 at 10 a.m.
At 127 S. Senior Center
Investment SIG

September 22 at 1 p.m.
At FFG Community Church
Photography Club

September Program

Using Skype, the Video/Voice Over Internet Service

How good is this: free telephone calls around the globe!!! On Monday, September 19, at 4:00 pm, the Plateau PC Users group will present a program about using Skype. The Skype software and services are now enjoyed by over 663 Million subscribers, providing voice over Internet service that is easy to set up, easy to use and really affordable. Check out your monthly phone bills and see what you might be able to save, using a service like this. Member Bonnie Parrish has recently moved to Crossville and has helped many others learn about Skype. Her presentation will include describing Skype, the various subscription plans and services, how to set it up on your computer, and a live demonstration of a long distance voice / video conversation. Non-members are welcome and there is no charge for attendance.

Tip of the Month

Windows XP Maintenance

Although it can be time consuming, it’s always a good idea to regularly run Disk Cleanup your computer. To save time, you can schedule this type of maintenance so that your computer automatically does it when you don’t need to work. Click Start, Control Panel, and open the Scheduled Tasks folder. Double click on Add Scheduled Task to open the Scheduled Task Wizard. Follow the Wizard’s prompts to select what type of task you want to schedule, how often you want it done, and what time of day you want it to happen.

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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

The GAZETTE is published using the following: Microsoft Word, Microsoft Publisher, and Microsoft Windows. The GAZETTE is the monthly newsletter of the Plateau PC Users Group. Material in the GAZETTE may be freely used in other user group newsletters if credit is given the author and the PPCUG GAZETTE. PPCUG members may place free classified advertising (up to 50 words) in the GAZETTE (run time maximum of three months). Commercial ads (local advertisers) may be placed at 50 cents per line. Graphic ads (camera ready) are as follows: \$25 per 1/4 page, \$40 per 1/2 page, \$75 per full page.

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Photography SIG	Jim Mansfield	(931) 484-6920

Up Coming Meeting

The next General Meeting of the
PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP
Will be on **October 17, 2011 at 3:00 P. M. at**
127 S. SENIOR CENTER

Program to be determined

New Members

Jim Jeffries
Randy Knowles
Debbie Trevena

Classes

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

Cool Sites

This site can help you find a phone number for many companies and help connect you to a human. Just type in the name of the company and search.

www.gethuman.com

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 Meeting Minutes

08/15/2011

Meeting called to order at 6:02PM by Alan Baker to begin the Q&A portion of the evening. A lively discussion period covered such topics as, “Is it worthwhile repairing a laptop with failed screen?” Ans: Likely not economically justified. This also brought up the question of what to do when disposing of outdated or surplus computers. Alan’s recommendation is to physically remove the hard drive and destroy it.

A question of how to manage updates brought a suggestion that it is more convenient to set up to notify when an update is available but to download and install at your convenience after insuring that it is even something you want updated.

A new member brought attention to a site called “[AllMyFaves](#).” This site has numerous links organized by topic, which have proved to be reliable and worthwhile. It is a one-stop shop for a variety of interests.

A question of CPU fan operation called attention to being mindful of maintaining clean unobstructed airflow through our equipment for cooling purposes. Insure that screens and filters are kept clear of animal hair, dust or obstruction. This is very important to prevent overheating, slowed operation and longevity of equipment. Excess fan noise should be investigated.

One member reported a message from an internet provider stating that a “BOT” program had been detected on at least one of their computers. Alan explained that this was short for a “robot” program which most likely had been hidden in an email or website and loaded on this computer. Usually these are dormant programs controlled or triggered by the originator to do some sort of malicious action such as email broadcasting to the host email contacts. Programs such as antivirus programs, Malwarebytes or Superantispyware can be used to eliminate “BOTS.”

Steve Rosenstein announced that the September meeting will begin the winter hours schedule with a change to 3:00PM starting time. The September program will be on Skype and Magic Jack for those interested in using their computer as a telephone.

Alan then began his presentation on “backing up” and file management. Backing up is a protection against losing data through equipment failure, theft, fire, mischief or simply to make room on your computer. Back up devices can be CD/DVD, flash drives, an external hard drive, an internal hard drive or even an outside source provider. A good back up device should be separable. This limits the value of an internal backup. Usually it is most important to backup those files which you have created (documents, pictures etc.) not necessarily things like programs which can be recreated by downloads or reloads of software. Through thoughtful file system planning it is possible to make backing up much easier. By creating a “data” or “document” folder for the purpose of storing all the files that you would want to preserve in a back up, it is simple to back up that folder on an external storage device. This method provides a quick and simple process. Another option would be to have an external device, such as an external hard drive with enough speed and capacity to image the entire computer hard drive. This allows an actual “digital picture” of your computer at the moment of the back up. Because this takes a more expensive device and also takes more time to copy, it is less likely to be done as often as the former method and therefore the risk of losing more of your data in a computer crash or loss is increased.

It is important to remember that the software used to create the back up will most likely be needed to restore the files.

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Once a back up device is used it is important to consider where it will be kept and how it will be protected. It would be of no use to have a back up damaged by the same fire or flood or stolen along with the computer it was supposed to protect.

Alan also provided a handout, which covered much of the information presented.

Marie Swift and Kay Cargill were the winners of the door prizes.

Submitted by:
Dick Del Frate
Secretary

Is There a Tablet PC in Your Future?

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS
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Apple's iPad tablets are flying off the shelves and many competitors are introducing similar tablets. Here's a brief synopsis of the tablet situation and what it means to you. In just nine months in 2010, Apple sold more than 15 million iPads. In the first month of sales, the iPad 2 sold millions more. According to some industry experts the iPad is the fastest growing new product in history. Perhaps, though, the most important thing about the iPad is that it has ushered in a new era in computing. Steve Jobs calls it the Post PC age. Although I agree that this is a new era in computing, there is nothing Post PC about it. The iPods, iPhones, and iPads that Mr. Jobs is talking about, all run on computer processor chips. They all perform functions that are similar to those performed by computers. No, this is not the Post PC era. Rather, it is the era of ubiquitous computing. If you look up the word "ubiquitous," you will find that it means omnipresent, pervasive, permeating, universal, and ever-present. This is what mobile devices like the iPhone and especially the iPad bring to us.

I expect that tablet PCs like the iPad will continue to grow in popularity. Although as of this moment, no other manufacturer has yet been able to equal the design, implementation, and price point that Apple has set, the march of the tablets has only just begun. There is plenty of competition in the making. Apple boasted 9.5 billion in revenue from the iPad in the last nine months of 2010, so everyone else is hurrying to get their version of the tablet PC to market.

Motorola recently released the Xoom, an Android tablet that is a competitive but pricey alternative to the iPad. Research in Motion, the creators of the BlackBerry, released their tablet called the Playbook in April. This will, of course, be based on their own BlackBerry operating system. Asus, Dell and LG Electronics will be introducing new tablets based on the Android operating system in the next few months. Samsung has announced that they will re-vamp their Android Galaxy Tab tablet and introduce two updated versions soon. HP is scheduled to roll out its first tablet based on the webOS operating system sometime in June. So within the next few months, we will have at least eight tablets from major manufacturers running four different operating systems.

If you are wondering why you should care about this, here's the scoop. Tablets are an entirely new category of computers. In most cases, they will not replace personal computers but will augment them. There will still be computers running infrastructure, businesses, and hospitals, but both professionals and home users will find tablets extremely useful for their day-to-day living.

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Since tablets have touch screens, you don't need a keyboard, mouse, or stylus. This makes them extremely portable. Also most tablets have very long battery lives, so you aren't tethered to the wall by a cable. Because tablets use apps rather than traditional software programs, they are much easier to use and more stress-free than computers. App stores like Apple's iTunes store and Android's Marketplace have hundreds of thousands of apps available, so a tablet PC can be quickly and easily personalized to perform only the functions that the user needs or wants. This gives users a more intimate relationship with their devices.

In fact, this relationship is not only revolutionary, it is often somewhat magical. I recently watched my three-year-old granddaughter play with a Disney fairy app on an iPad. She gently moved the iPad to and fro to make Tinkerbell and her friends fly over the breathtaking scenery sprinkling fairy dust over the land. She was thoroughly enchanted. I also watched a 70-year-old man who was equally mesmerized by the interactive audio and video of a magazine site that he was viewing on his iPad. These devices are engaging for everyone. People from three to 103 can use and enjoy them. Tablets are so empowering that I predict that they will become indispensable to everyday living. Who wants to walk into another room to get over to the computer when they need a recipe or want to look up a word. It is much easier to just grab a tablet PC off the coffee table. You can use it to watch television when you are on the go, to check the weather in the morning, or to read a book or listen to music as you endure the wait in the doctor's office.

Teachers are using tablets with great success because they are enthralling to children. Doctors are using them as a point-of-care device that can not only document the patient's progress, but can also help doctors explain procedures to patients. Artists are using them to create new masterpieces.

More and more applications are being found for tablets every day. With the new tablets that will be appearing in the next few months, this will be a very interesting category of devices to watch. Keep your eyes open, there may be a tablet PC in your future.

Best Free Software" Lists from Gizmo Now Include iPad and Android Apps

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/top-freeware-picks-category-editors.htm>

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-ipad-apps.htm>

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-android-apps.htm>

I am frequently asked about information and sources of free software, and my most frequent response has had something to do with Gizmo, and his comprehensive website [techsupportalert.com](http://www.techsupportalert.com). Gizmo, also known as Gizmo Richards, is really Ian Richards, an Australian, who has been active in the hardware and software industries for many years, and has developed an enviable reputation as the senior editor of a major computer publication. Gizmo compiled a list of 46 free software programs as a lark, and intended it for internal use, but when his list went viral, Gizmo attained celebrity status.

Now, Gizmo's [TechSupportAlert.com](http://www.techsupportalert.com) lists over 200 categories of free software, each product rated by his sizeable community of volunteers. According to Gizmo on [techsupportalert.com/about-this-site](http://www.techsupportalert.com/about-this-site), "Gizmo's Freeware is a non-

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commercial community website staffed entirely by volunteers. Our primary function is to help you select the best freeware product for your particular needs. The best freeware programs are as good as or better than their commercial counterparts, but finding the most appropriate program can be challenging. Sure, there are dozens of freeware download sites on the web, but few of these actually help you select the best program for your needs. That's what we do here. No downloads, just honest advice and useful guidance. It's honest because this is a community-based site staffed by volunteers and we have no commercial affiliations."

TechSupportAlert.com is continuously revised, with new and updated categories of software appearing on a daily basis. I personally use Gizmo regularly to locate software for my own use, as well as make recommendations to others seeking free software solutions. One section that I visit several times a week is Gizmo's "The Editors' Choice List: Our Selection of the Best PC Freeware" at www.techsupportalert.com/content/top-freeware-picks-category-editors.htm. According to Gizmo, "This really is a "best of the best" list. Most of the products in this list have been awarded the coveted "Gizmo's Top" pick award signifying they are the best free product in their class." The top pick awards are decided not by Gizmo personally, but the sizable community of volunteers who evaluate the software. On this page is a searchable menu, sorted by type of software, which makes it easy to locate the best of any category. Several of the categories not only list the top picks along with links to the latest review, but sometimes also discusses close finishers that have some substantial benefits or advantages. Gizmo is not a download site, but has the links to the software publishers' websites where the software can be safely downloaded. This listing of "best" free software may be a wise choice to peruse prior to purchasing any commercial software, as many of the free products are very competitive (and sometimes superior) to their commercial counterparts.

With the expanding of popularity of Apple iPads and Google Android devices, Gizmo has expanded its ratings to cover those platforms. The Gizmo " Best Free iPad Apps" list at www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-ipad-apps.htm offers the user a wide selection of top-rated apps, along with instructions for downloading and installation. Similar to the PC directory of top rated free software, this "Best" list is both menu driven and searchable. According to Gizmo, " ... here at Gizmo's Freeware, we only select the best from the free ones that work best on your iPad." The menu for the free iPad apps is divided into 10 broad categories, with each category divided into a more detailed directory of the best apps. Each of these apps in the "Best" category have been tested and evaluated by Gizmo's iPad community, and rated as the best app in their respective categories.

While the iPad apps listed were explicitly tested and rated for iPads, many of the listed have a blue plus sign on the bottom-right corner of their icon or logo, which means that that particular app is " ... designed for or compatible with not only iPad, but also iPhone and iPod touch." I just checked, and the Apple App Store currently lists nearly 400,000 available apps, but by utilizing the Gizmo " Best Free iPad Apps" list, the user is likely to find the best free apps for his purposes.

Google's Android operating system is showing up on smart phones, tablets, and other mobile devices. Google currently lists over 200,000 Android apps in its Android Market, but many of them are not free. Gizmo says, "To help you get the best of the free ones, we have selected some gems in each category and added them here in a single convenient list with clear and brief descriptions of each application item." The Gizmo "Best Free Android Apps" is online at www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-android-apps.htm. The searchable menu is divided into 11 categories, with each category having a list of sub-categories, making the best apps easy to find.

To download and install one of the listed "Best" Android Apps, "Move your mouse over the program icons and scan the QR Code images on this page with your device's barcode scanner; or click the program titles below in your PC's browser or tap them in Android's browser, then install the apps from the Android Market." Using a browser on my desktop computer, when moving my mouse over the logo or icon for a selected Android App, a large QR (Quick Response) code appears on the screen, which can be read by the camera in the Android device, which connects di-

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rectly to the site to download the app. It sounds complicated, but is actually very fast and easy, and makes downloading the "Best" free Android apps an effortless activity. For those who may not be comfortable with using optically scanned QR codes, simply clicking on the selected program icon will take the user directly to Google's Android Market where the "Install" button will start the installation process.

I have found Gizmo's TechSupportAlert.com to be an invaluable resource, and can strongly recommend it, not just for PCs but for iPad and Android devices as well.

The Cloud

By Berry F. Phillips, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City
July 2011 issue, eMonitor
www.ccokc.org
[bfpdata\(at\)1access.net](mailto:bfpdata(at)1access.net)

"Cross my palm with silver" is the common opening line of a fortune teller before looking into her crystal ball to foretell the future. Perhaps at looking into the future of computing, we should consult the "clouds" not a crystal ball!
"Beam me up, Scotty!"

Your computer in the future may contain almost no software or data. It could be nothing more than a display terminal for processes occurring on a network of computers far away called "The Cloud". A common explanatory analogy is that of public utilities such as electricity, gas, and water. Just as centralized and standardized utilities free users from the difficulties of generating electricity or pumping water, cloud computing frees users from certain hardware and software installation and maintenance tasks through the use of simpler hardware that accesses a vast network of computer resources (processors, hard drives, etc.). The sharing of resources reduces the cost to individuals.

Today many of us connect to web-based email such as Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, a company owned e-mail, or even an e-mail client program, such as Outlook, Evolution, Mozilla Thunderbird or Entourage, that connects to a cloud email server. Utilizing desktop applications to connect to your email is considered a cloud application.

The key characteristic of cloud computing is that computing is "in the cloud". The processing (and the related data) is not in a specific, known or static place(s). This is in contrast to a model in which the processing takes place in one or more specific servers that are known. All the other concepts mentioned are supplementary or complementary to the concept. In the 1960s John McCarthy said, "computation someday will be organized as a public utility". Almost all the modern-day characteristics of cloud computing were thoroughly explored in Douglas Parhill's 1966 book, "The Challenge Of the Computer Utility".

What are some of the key benefits to cloud computing? Agility improves with the users' ability to rapidly and inexpensively re-provision technological infrastructure resources. Application Programming Interface (API) accessibility to software that enables machines to interact with cloud software in the same way the user interface facilitates interaction between humans and computers.

Cost is claimed to be greatly reduced and in a public cloud delivery model capital expenditure is converted to operational expenditure. Device and location independence enable users to access systems using web browser regardless of the location they are using (e.g., PC, mobile phone).

As infrastructure is off-site (typically provided by a third-party) and accessed via the Internet, users can connect

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from anywhere. This is why many IT professionals believe the future of computing is mobile cloud-based. There may be one day when desktop and laptop computers will be as archaic as dinosaurs. Multi-tenancy enables sharing of resources and costs across a large pool of users.

Reliability is improved if multiple redundant sites are used, which makes well designed cloud computing suitable for business continuity and disaster recovery. Scalability is improved on a self-service bases near real-time.

Performance is monitored and consistent, using web services as the system interface.

Security could improve due to centralization of data.

Maintenance for cloud computing applications is easier because they do not need to be installed on each user's computer. They are easier to support and to improve as the changes reach the client instantly.

There are different clouds like public clouds, community clouds, hybrid clouds, combined clouds and private clouds which have specific applications. The operation and development of these clouds are called cloud engineering. Cloud storage is a model of networked computer data storage where data is stored on multiple servers which are usually hosted by third parties, rather than hosted on dedicated servers.

I downloaded two cloud-based freeware anti-virus programs on my system to see how they worked. One was Panda and the other was Immundet. I loaded both of them so they ran on my system by themselves. They had one thing in common, as they used little resources and there were few if any updates. Of course, that is to be expected since all the virus databases are updated in the cloud. I found both programs worked very well. Panda will not run with any other anti-virus system on; however Immundet works very well with another anti-virus system operating. As a general rule, users are cautioned to use only one anti-virus system to avoid conflicts. I think in the future, we will see more cloud-based applications. There are several companies now providing cloud-based storage for a fee. Looking ahead, mobile devices using cloud computing may indeed be the computing of the future.

My thanks to Wikipedia for most of the information that is contained in this article.

Free Backup Software from EaseUS

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

■ <http://www.todo-backup.com/products/home/free-backup-software.htm>

■ <http://www.easeus.com/disk-copy>

Last week I wrote about the imperative necessity to frequently or constantly backup our hard drives. I referenced the three most important words in computing, "Backup! Backup ! and Backup!". I warned about Murphy's first law of computing, "A properly backed up hard drive will never fail; but the first time that you do not have a current backup, it will always fail at the most inopportune time." Apparently some of you paid attention, because I received several emails and phone calls from readers asking for specific recommendations, predominantly for free backup software. I tried a few of the free backup utilities, and created a preference for EaseUS Todo Backup Free 3.0, available for download at ■ www.todo-backup.com/products/home/free-backup-software.htm. This free backup utility will run on almost all Windows systems, including Windows 2000, XP, Vista, Windows 7 (all 32 & 64 bit systems), with FAT or NTFS file systems, and with RAID or dynamic disks.

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EaseUS Todo Backup Free 3.0 is a very complete product, offering just about every backup function in a single free utility. This utility can create a hard disk image which can be used to totally restore the contents of a dead hard drive to a new hard drive, allowing the user to be up and running in a matter of minutes. Being in a disaster prone area, subject to the whims of hurricanes, tornadoes, and brush fires, disaster recovery should be of concern to all users, and this backup software makes fast recovery possible. Viruses, worms, trojans, physical wear and tear, power surges, and accidental damage can harm or destroy a hard drive, and this software can be used to recover that data, provided that a backup had been created in a timely fashion. Unlike some other products, EaseUS Todo Backup Free can automatically create and maintain (update) the image file in real time without user intervention. Because of this beneficial feature, the user who has this feature activated, will always have a current image backup that can restore the entire hard drive in the event of a catastrophic failure. For those who prefer to schedule backups, they can be run at a predetermined time, now, daily, weekly, or monthly.

While I frequently create an image file capable of restoring an entire hard drive, including operating system and program files, I mostly create a file backup where my data files are backed up. With this feature, data files of all types, including documents, spreadsheets, images, videos, email, music, and other data types can be instantly recovered or restored if necessary. If desired, entire folders, along with all of their contents, can automatically be backed up. I cannot count how many times in recent years that I have had to recover files from the backup, which is a great convenience. The EaseUS Todo Backup Free can automatically create and maintain both differential (files that have changed since last backup) and incremental (newer versions or changed files) backups, such that the user does not have to manually create and update backups unless desired.

EaseUS Todo Backup Free makes it very easy to recover from the disastrous loss of data caused by a hard drive failure, provided that a backup had been created. The software can easily create a bootable CD, DVD, or USB drive with either a Linux or WinPE operating system (included) that can boot the computer and then run EaseUS Todo Backup utility. Once booted, this utility can read the recovery media, and then recreate a hard drive, all with a single click. Typically, following a hard drive failure, the hard drive is replaced. Since the newly installed hard drive is effectively blank, it needs to have an operating system, programs, and data reinstalled in order to restore complete functionality. The previously created image file is an exact copy of what was on the original hard drive when the backup was created, so restoring the image to the new hard drive results in a fully functional hard drive complete with operating system, programs, and data files. In terms of usability, it is just as if the original hard drive was still functional, but now the computer is running with a new hard drive. If instead of just a hard drive being replaced, other major components are replaced, or an entirely new computer is obtained, this software can install the previously created image file on the repaired or new computer, enabling rapid use of all previously installed programs and data. This same process can be followed if the user upgrades his computer with a larger hard drive, and then restores the operating system and all program and data files from the image backup. Likewise, the user who purchases a new computer can use this software to install existing programs to a new PC, a process called "Migration".

While my personal preferences are to create backups to multiple external USB hard drives, and data CD and DVD discs, EaseUS Todo Backup also supports backing up to remote off-premises backup services, network attached storage, FTP to remote servers, and almost all other forms of backup media, devices, and services. Some users prefer to use a virtual machine (memory resident), and this backup utility supports that option by being able to convert the backup image file to .VMDK (VMware virtual disk format) or .VHD (for Virtual PC) and then mount into a virtual machine directly. While most users would likely just restore the image to a new hard drive, some users may prefer the virtual machine method.

In terms of security, this software offers several options. Access to the backup, regardless of media used, may be restricted by the use of a password, giving some protection from unauthorized access. For even greater security, 256

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bit AES encryption of the backup is available, making it almost impossible for unauthorized users to be able to read the backup files. Sometimes users may want to securely erase all or parts (folders and files) of a hard drive, making it nearly impossible to recover erased files; EaseUS Todo Backup offers a secure "Wipe" function that securely eliminates content from the hard drive.

In experimenting with EaseUS Todo Backup Free 3.0, I found it to be a most comprehensive and complete backup utility, that can backup and recover from and to any combination of hardware and systems. In response to my readers who asked for a recommendation for a free backup utility, this may be the one to try.

THIS AND THAT

By Elizabeth B. Wright, Member, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

July 2011 issue, CCOKC eMonitor

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Remember the play "Six Degrees of Separation?" It was also a movie. The title has become a common catch-phrase, but it doesn't really get the respect it is due. The theory is that all of us are connected to everyone in the world by only six steps. I know Pete, Pete knows Pierre, Pierre knows a high powered British politician, the HPBP knows a member of the British Royal Family, the Royal is related to and knows the English Monarch. So following this line, there are only four people separating me from knowing British Monarch. Of course my chances of meeting her are non-existent, but that isn't the point. The lesson here is that so much of what we do is influenced by this factor. Pyramid schemes are doomed to failure because of it. Ideas are lost because of it. Tell one person about your fantastic theory for curing some horrible disease and the next thing you know it has been patented by someone you never heard of. This is also why you keep getting the same junk email from so many different people.

So how can we apply this to our computers? If you are like most of us, we use our computers for the more simple tasks of word processing, connecting to the internet, some bookkeeping (banking software, etc.), graphics – mostly photographs, and other simplified work. But we all run into trouble now and again. A big "for instance." I booted up my computer this morning to work on this article. And for the first time in my 20 some years of owning a computer, it failed to boot the hard drives properly. I could not access much of my data. Nothing to do but shut it down, fortunately it went through the proper procedure for that, and turn it back on. It came back in its normal configuration. Go figure. Hopefully this will never happen again, but only time will tell.

Back to the subject at hand. There are 6° separating us from useful computer skills:

1. Computer hardware
2. Operating system
3. Computer skills
4. Purchasing software
5. Software training
6. Computer competence

#1, Whether you bought a computer completely assembled or built it yourself, the first step requires knowing what is inside the case. You don't necessarily have to completely understand how it all works, but you should at least be familiar with the names of the parts in order to use some of the helpful information found in the manuals and other books as well as on the internet.

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Second step, and possibly the most frustrating, is getting to know the operating system. This is the software that is like the fuel that runs the engine of your car. Without it, you ain't goin' no place. In the early years of computers there were no operating systems (often referred to as OS.) Only those people who really, really wanted to learn about computers mastered the necessary skills to do so. Now the two main choices to get us over that hurdle are Microsoft Windows machines and Apple Macs. Both require an OS to make them do our bidding. The more you learn about the OS the easier other tasks will become. Computer clubs and community colleges are places to look for help in this area.

For item #3, learning basic computer skills gets you started, honing those skills keeps you moving forward. This step is somewhat a combination of learning about the OS and learning to use software as in step #5. Some kind of training is usually necessary and can be gotten from the previously mentioned clubs and classes, but also from a REALLY patient friend or relative who will spend endless hours helping you learn this most foreign of foreign languages. Of course you can always slog your way through it on your own, but what fun is that?

#4, Purchasing software depends on what you want the computer to do for you. Most home/small office users buy programs for personal finances, word processing, spreadsheets and graphics. People who need to make the computer pay for itself and also support them buy, in addition to those, the more sophisticated software for databases and intense graphical work. There are also "Gamers," but they are different from most of us.

#5, Software Training is a bit less daunting than computer skill training in that much of it consists of following certain steps to accomplish a given task. But of course, it isn't really easy. You must be willing to set aside preconceived notions of how things ought to work and live with how the programmers mandated them to work. But there are classes, books, online training, computer clubs and friends to help out in this step too.

The final step, Computer Competence, is the goal line in our 6^o hypothesis. There are four steps between your purchase of the hardware and competence/confidence in using it. If you don't get the cart before the horse in those four steps you will be much happier in your computer world.

A Few Tips for Customizing Word 2007

By Nancy DeMarte, Columnist, Office Talk, Sarasota PCUG, Inc., Florida
July 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor
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When creating Office 2007 programs, Microsoft added new tools and settings designed to save time and simplify tasks for users. Some of us find that while we appreciate most of these features, a few are getting in our way. Fortunately, many of these default settings can be disabled or modified. Here are a few customizations that I have found to be helpful.

Add commands to the Quick Access toolbar: Let us say that you use a certain command often, like the Spelling & Grammar checker, but keep forgetting where it is located in the Word 2007 ribbon. There is an easy solution. You can copy any command to the Quick Access toolbar, which is always visible in the top left corner of the Word window above the Office button. To place a tool button there, first find it on the ribbon, right click it and select *Add to Quick Access toolbar*. If you have several commands you want to move there, start by clicking the arrow to the right of the Quick Access toolbar. Then click a command you want from the list, which puts a checkmark next to it and adds it to the Quick Access toolbar. You may have to click *More commands* to expand the list. In this view, click a

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command in the left pane, and then click Add to put it on the Quick Access toolbar, shown in the right pane. Repeat for as many commands as you want, then click OK. Tip: Be a bit selective or your Quick Access toolbar may get so long it blocks out the title of your document.

Control the space between lines and paragraphs in your customized Normal template: In August 2010, I wrote a Monitor article about how to customize the Normal Template in Word 2007 on which all new documents are based. Recently, I learned that even making those changes does not rid your documents of the extra space between the lines and paragraphs. Apparently, even Microsoft acknowledges that the Word 2007 line spacing rules are not easy to change.

Word 2003 and earlier versions used single spacing between lines and after paragraphs, which is what many users would like to get back. Word 2007's default setting is 1.15 pts between lines and 1.15 plus a blank line after paragraphs. A fairly easy way to revert your Word 2007 spacing back to the 2003 version is by changing the Style Set. Open a Word 2007 document. Click the Home tab, and then click *Change Styles* in the Styles group. Point to Style Set and click *Word 2003*. To make the new style set become the default in Word 2007, click *Change Styles* again, and then click *Set as Default*. If you prefer not to go through all those steps, Microsoft has created a little fix-it tool which will make these changes for you. You can download it from the Microsoft website at this address: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/921174>.

Create Custom Page Margins: If the margins in your document are not set the way you want them, you can fairly easily change the margins to your liking. With your document open, click the *Page Layout* tab, and then click *Margins* in the Page Setup group. The Normal setting for Word 2007 is 1 inch on all sides - top, bottom, left and right. Several other choices appear in the drop down gallery. If you like one of these, merely click it and watch your document change to the new margin settings.

If you do not find what you want in the margins gallery, you can create your own customized margins. Open the Margins gallery and click *Custom Margins*, which opens the Page Setup dialog box. On the Margins tab, type your desired settings in the four boxes, leaving Gutter (the area left for binding or hole-punching) at "0" and "left." If you want these new margins in effect for only the current document, click *OK*. If you want to use them for this and future documents, click *Default*, and then *OK*.

Add the Right Kind of Date to Your Document: Many of us like to put dates in our documents to identify when they were written. But when we open some documents, we find the current date rather than the date it was composed. Word allows us to enter two sorts of dates and times: a date which never changes or a date which updates automatically whenever the document is opened. It helps to know how to enter both types since there are occasions when each is appropriate.

To enter a static date, just type it somewhere in the document or footer. Another way is to click the Insert tab and, in the Text group, click *Date & Time*. This opens a dialog box where you can choose from several formats for the date and/or time. Be sure to uncheck the box next to *Update automatically* if you want the date to remain static.

To enter a date that updates each time you open the document, click the *Date & Time* button as explained above. This time be sure that *Update automatically* is checked. A way to add a date with specific properties is to add a date "field." Click the Insert tab, then *Quick Parts*, then *Field*. In the Field box, select the *Date and Time* category. Here you will find several specialized fields, such as CreateDate, PrintDate, and SaveDate. A quick way to insert a field for a date is to use the keystroke shortcut, [Shift]+[Alt]+[D]. Get rid of the Mini Toolbar: Whenever you highlight a word or phrase in Word 2007, a mini toolbar of editing commands appears above and almost covering the highlighted text, which can be annoying. The mini toolbar is a new feature of Word 2007/2010. Its purpose is to put the

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most commonly used editing commands close to where you need them. For some this is a time-saver; for others, it's a pain. Fortunately, you can turn off if it bothers you. To disable this feature, click the Office button, then *Word Options* (bottom right), and then *Popular*. Remove the checkmark from the box next to *Show mini-bar on selection* and click *OK*.

Do you have problems with Office 2007 that need solving? Let me know, and I'll try to include them in a future article. Send to ndemarte@verizon.net.

Spotify Online Music Service Arrives in U.S.

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://www.spotify.com/us/hello-america/>

You may have not heard of Spotify, but millions of Europeans are intimately aware of the world class online music service. Now, Spotify is available in the U.S., in free, premium, and mobile versions. There has been a lot of domestic online buzz about Spotify, but many Americans are unaware of what may arguably be the largest legal online music service, with a claimed 15 million tracks of music available.

At present, users who would like to subscribe to the free version of the Spotify service must have an invite to join, and several affinity groups and consumer products are offering invites to Spotify. The general public can request an invite on the main Spotify webpage (www.spotify.com/us/hello-america), and an invite will be sent via email as capacity becomes available. An invite is not necessary for those who would like to subscribe to the paid Spotify service, which starts at \$4.99 per month for the "Unlimited" subscription, and \$9.99 monthly for the "Premium" service. Spotify is available in PC and MAC versions for desktops, laptops, netbooks, and most smart phones, making these millions of music tracks readily available whenever and wherever needed. The free desktop version is advertiser supported, with ads displayed along the right edge of the desktop display, and an occasional short audio ad after a number of selections have been played; the paid subscriptions do not display or play ads. The offline versions are only available by paid subscription.

I received an early invite to Spotify, and signed up for the free version. After registering online using the registration code provided by Spotify in the email invitation, I downloaded the 5 megabyte installer for the desktop version. The installation ran smoothly, and upon completion, opened the desktop utility. On the left edge of the desktop utility are a series of choices which can locate and display any music already on the computer, import playlists from Windows Media Player, add titles to a playlist, and display any compatible devices that may be connected to the computer. The "What's New" feature opens a tabbed central window that displays new releases, the most popular tracks and albums selected by users, and "Feed" which displays music shared by your friends on Facebook as well as the latest news from Spotify.

The millions of tracks available can be searched by title or album from the search box, and results can be easily selected into playlists. According to Spotify, " ... creating playlists is as easy as drag and drop. Each new playlist is saved to your account, and will be accessible from wherever you use Spotify." Being a fan of classical Gershwin, I did a search for "Rhapsody in Blue", and well over 100 versions and related titles appeared. On the left of each item is a gold star that can be selected, and this helps create the playlist. On the left side of the window is a button "+ New Playlist", which I clicked on, and aptly named Rhapsody in Blue. I clicked on the "Starred" link on the left, and the selections that I had chosen were all displayed; I painted the list, and dragged the starred list over to my newly created Rhapsody in Blue playlist, and my customized playlist was immediately created. I added some "An

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American in Paris" and "Porgy and Bess", and created my version of about three hours of musical bliss. As each item in the playlist is played, the image of the original album cover appears on the bottom left corner of the display.

Spotify offers the opportunity to share tracks and playlists with others. "To us, sharing music is one of life's great pleasures. That's why we've made it so simple for you to share tracks and play-lists with your friends. When we say 'simple', we mean one-click-simple." I had to try it, and clicked on the playlist title in the left column, and a "Share" link appeared on the top of the page. With a single click, the playlist can be shared on Facebook, Twitter, or Microsoft Messenger. The Spotify software instantly posted my playlist on Facebook, and with the displayed link at open.spotify.com/user/iwilsker/playlist/1EYbroWYAbd72nf4hldVXR, anyone can download the free Spotify player and listen to my playlist. I downloaded the Spotify installer to my laptop using the same username and password created for my desktop computer, installed it, and the playlists I created on my desktop magically appeared on my laptop! One click, and I was listening to my favorite music.

The features of Spotify, including any prepared playlists, can be played over most mobile phones with a free or paid subscription, but a paid subscription is necessary to access the playlist offline. In order to listen to streaming Spotify over a mobile or smart phone, a paid premium subscription and a 2.5G or 3G (or faster) connection, or WiFi, is necessary. Users of iPhones or Android devices can download the Spotify app giving full access to Spotify, including synching your own music files with Spotify. According to the Spotify website, apps for Symbian phones (mostly from Nokia), Windows phones, and Palm phones are in development and are expected to be available soon, but apps for some of these phones may have recently become available. I have a Nokia smart phone with the Symbian operating system, and using the phone's browser (I use Opera Mobile for my phone browser), I connected to m.spotify.com, which informed me that a compatible Symbian app was available, so I selected to download the 2.4 mb application to my phone. I was a little disappointed when a window appeared informing me that I needed a premium subscription in order to use the app on my Nokia Symbian phone. Apps for other phone operating systems may possibly be available, which can be determined by connecting the phone browser tom.spotify.com, and following the on screen prompts. If an app is available, it will be displayed, along with installation instructions.

For those who may desire additional features, the "Unlimited \$4.99" or "Premium \$9.99" monthly subscriptions will provide additional benefits over the free service. The Unlimited version has all of the features of the free version, but does not display or play any advertisements, and has the ability to be available for up to 14 days when traveling outside the U.S. The Premium version has all of the Unlimited features, plus increased functionality on mobile phones, offline availability of playlists on both computers and mobile phones (no internet connection required), unlimited international access (for travelers going outside the U.S.), enhanced sound quality, and the capability to play Spotify through connected music systems (possibly without a computer). It should be noted that at present, offline content is limited to a precise maximum of 3,333 tracks, which should be adequate for most users.

For those who would like to legally access millions of tracks of online music, and play or share tracks and playlists at will, Spotify may be very entertaining. Oh, and my Rhapsody in Blue playlist is still playing on my computer.



October 2011

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