PATACS Posts

Keeping Up
By Paul Howard (PATACS Treasurer)

Back at the keyboard after a 12+ hour power outage. Hoping to finish this before the next round of thunderstorms hit. But it's tough to type with crossed fingers.

Our merger is complete – at a Fairfax joint board meeting on May 19th, the fifteen members of the NCTCUG and WACUG boards completed the required board motions, votes, and necessary paperwork so we're now the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society. Seven pages were sent to the Virginia State Corporation Commission, along with a $25 filing fee, and, as of June 5th, the merger activity and group name change are recognized as official by the state. You can find all the related paperwork on the web site. Roll your mouse pointer over "About Us" and click on the "Org Docs" popout. The merger material is on the top half of the page in two sections. Go directly - http://patacs.org/orgdocspat.html

Next step is submission of documentation to the IRS to get our 501 (c)(3) – non-profit, educational organization status - confirmed for PATACS . Both WAC and NCTCUG had this status; since WACUG no longer exists, notifications and revisions are necessary to keep our tax exempt status in place. Last time we had a name change, it took more than 90 days to get the confirming paperwork back from the IRS. My fingers are now double-crossed.

Our intrepid newsletter editors, Blair Jones and Geof Goodrum, are continuing their efforts to arrive at common layout for our publication. The stars haven't been entirely cooperative in aligning for these efforts. At our first board meeting in our substitute Arlington location at the Walter Reed Community Center, we had problems getting into our usual newsletter assembly rhythm. One issue – membership chair Mel Mikosinski's printer was balky, and had produced strange results on some of the mailing labels. It took ten or fifteen minutes extra to sort thru everything to be sure a newsletter would be mailed to everyone on the mail receipt list. If you'd prefer not to receive a printed copy of the newsletter, and only get the PDF download version, please send an email to that effect to: membership@patacs.org

There's still lots to do as we continue the integration of our two clubs into one. The board will be considering changes and improvements in the delivery of member services. Send suggestions on things you'd like to see PATACS do to the membership address noted above.
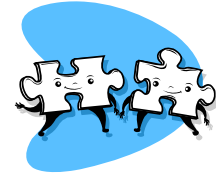
Inside

Useful Bits & Pieces #6, June 2012

Lorrin R. Garson, PATACS

Computers 1,000 Times Faster?

Today the speed of CPUs is measured in GHz. Typically, modern CPUs are clocked at 1-3 GHz. The CPU of the IBM PC of 1981 had a clock speed of 4.8 MHz, or a bit faster than $1/1000^{th}$ of today's CPUs. Now imagine CPUs with clock speeds of 1000 times the speed of today's hardware. Investigators at the University of Pittsburgh have excited a silicon crystal with a laser pulse to reflect light that oscillates at 15.6 THz, which is the highest known mechanical frequency of atoms to date. See http://www.news.pitt.edu/terahert and http://www.nature.com/nphoton/journal/v6/n4/full/nphoton.2012.35.html for more information. This important finding points the way to what we might expect in the future, but the availability of CPUs with THz clock speeds is years away.

- MHz (megahertz—million cycles per second; 10^6 cps)
- GHz (gigahertz—billion cycles per second; 10^9 cps)
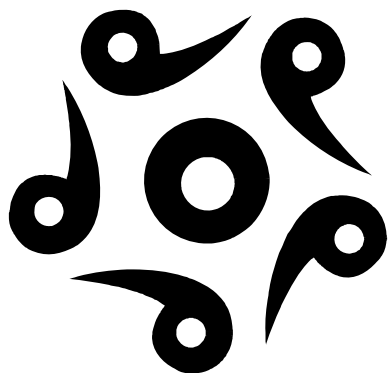- THz (terahertz—trillion cycles per second; 10^{12} cps)

Cloud Backup

Two maxims: (1) any backup is better than no backup and (2) there are pros and cons to every backup scheme. You may wish to consider backing-up your computer(s) to the cloud. There are numerous companies offering this service. The pros of cloud backup are: (a) off-site storage, (b) the provider is responsible for maintaining your backup, (c) generally easy to set up and backups are automatic, and (d) no extra hardware is required. The cons are: (a) some concern, but manageable, for security of your information, (b) the provider may go out of business, (c) the first backup is slow, and (d) cloud backup is more expensive that backup to local storage. Cloud backup is "file" oriented rather than "image" oriented, i.e., it isn't practical to create and store an image of a computer's hard disk drive, thus full system recovery is more complex and time consuming than backup schemes that include disk imaging. In Table 1 [below] are a number of companies that provide backup services. There are many others available. No recommendation or endorsement is made or implied. Be sure to carefully read the terms-of-service.

Provider	Reference	Computer	Price
Acronis True Image Online	http://www.acronis.com/homecomputing/products/online-backup/	PC only	$4.95/month for 250 GB
Carbonite	http://www.carbonite.com/en/3 http://www.carbonite.com/en/home/online-backup	PC & Mac	Three plans: $59/year, $99/year, $149/year. http://www.carbonite.com/en/home/online-backup-pricing
Code 42 CrashPlan	http://www.crashplan.com/consumer/crashplan-plus.html	PC, Mac, Linux, Solaris	$1.50 to $6.00/month 10 to unlimited GB, 1-10 computers
JustCloud	http://www.justcloud.com/	PC only	$4.95 to $9.95/month. Unlimited storage
Livedrive	http://www.livedrive.com/ForHome	PC & Mac	$7.95/month 1 computer, unlimited storage $15.95/month, 2 TB, files on all devices $24.95/month, unlimited, 5 computers
Mozy	http://mozy.com/home/	PC & Mac	$5.99/month for 50 GB, $9.99/month for 125 GB Add $2.00/month for each additional 20 GB
MyPCBackup	http://www.mypcbackup.com/	PC only	$9.95/month, unlimited storage
Rebit	http://rebit.com/	PC only	$6.67/month for 50 GB, $10.83/month for 100 GB
SOS Online Backup	http://www.sosonlinebackup.com/	PC Mac other devices	$6.66/month for 50 GB $8.33/month for 100 GB $12.50/month for 150 GB
ZipCloud	http://www.zipcloud.com/	PC & Mac	$6.95/month for 75 GB, $7.95/month for 250 GB $9.95/month unlimited GB

Synchronization Via the Cloud

Other companies offer a Cloud service that makes files available across multiple devices. Thus you could have a collection of PowerPoint presentations, photos, Word documents, etc., accessible on your desktop computer, iPad, laptop and other devices. Of course such a service could also be used for back-up, but the emphasis on the services in Table 2 is on sharing and synchronizing files. There are many companies providing this service. Again, no recommendation or endorsement is made or implied. Carefully read the terms-of-service keeping in mind you probably will be storing unencrypted information.

Arlington meetings are likely to continue at the Walter Reed Center thru September. Dealing with damage to four vertical support timbers has extended the construction schedule for work at Carlin Hall. Arlington County's made noises about charging their standard $30 per hour fee for meetings at Carlin Hall when it returns to normalcy.   The thought of an additional $720 a year per meeting to our cost structure has created a painful triple-cross situation at the 'Keeping Up' keyboard.

We've found a pleasant location for Pizza & Salad SIG after Arlington meetings at the Walter Reed Center - Mama's Pizza at the northeast corner of the Glebe Road / Columbia Pike intersection. Our genial host – Papa – has made us very welcome, and the gang has given a 'thumbs up' for the cuisine! Hope you'll join us at an Arlington meeting and the post-meeting palaver session soon!

Provider	Reference	Computer	Storage	Comments
Dropbox	https://www.dropbox.com/ https://www.dropbox.com/help	PC, Mac, Linux, & Mobile	2 GB free +50 GB/yr $99 +100 GB/yr $199	
Box	https://www.box.com/ https://www.box.com/personal/ http://blog.box.com/	PC, Mac, Linux, Mobile, & iPad	5 GB free 1000 GB/yr $180	Minimum 3 users. Oriented toward businesses
Google Drive	https://drive.google.com/start#home	PC, Mac & Android	5 GB free +25 GB/yr $29.88 +100 GB/yr $59.88	
Microsoft SkyDrive	http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/skydrive/home	PC, Mac, iPhone, iPad, Windows phone & others	7 GB free +20 GB/yr $10 +50 GB/yr $25 +100 GB/yr $50	
Apple iCloud	http://www.apple.com/icloud/	PC & Mac	5 GB free +10 GB/yr $20 +20 GB/yr $40 +50 GB/yr $100	

Acronis True Image Home 2012

By Herb Goldstein, Editor, Sarasota PCUG, FL www.spcug.org pcugedit (at) verizon.net

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In order for a computer to work it needs software, the primary basic and necessary of which is its operating system (e.g. Microsoft Windows). That being satisfied, your computer becomes a storehouse of data and information you provide to it in a moment by moment basis. Unfortunately there are a multitude of pitfalls and quagmires that can easily destroy all that vital and irreplaceable data in the blink of an eye. Consequently, the second most vitally important item that belongs on your computer is safe, competent, reliable software capable of backing up and replacing everything on your computer. Number one and most popular in that category is Acronis True Image Home that provides a bit for bit totally complete image of everything residing on your computer.

If you have never suffered the loss, in whole or in part, of what resides on your hard drive, you are very lucky. Secondly, you can be certain that one day you will. Be prepared for that day by making regular backups of your computer and using flawless imaging backup software, making Acronis True Image Home a must-have!

Most of our members have already heeded this advice, making Acronis True Image Home their most popular choice. I can tell you unashamedly that on several hard drive failure occasions over the years it has saved my life.

Acronis True Image Home has blossomed over the years into a comprehensive multi-faceted utility which in its latest release, Acronis True Image Home 12, is not only the leading backup, but currently contains a variety of essential utility components that make it an industry leader. Here is a quick rundown on some of what's new and improved in the currently available upgraded product:

Disk Imaging — Backup the entire system on the fly with our patented disk imaging technology. It ensures the recovery of your operating system and applications without reinstalling any software.

Clone Disk — Copy your entire hard drive and replace it with a new one without reinstalling operating systems and applications, saving hours of effort.

New! File Synchronization — lets you replicate important data between multiple computers, files or devices. Sync files with friends, family or colleagues over the Web. Or sync with local folders, including USB sticks or external hard drives.

Exclusive! Try&Decide® —lets you take a test drive first to see if you want to keep or discard the changes to your system. This is also very practical for browsing potentially dangerous websites.

Improved! Ease of Use — Acronis True Image Home 2012 allows you to delay the start of a backup at computer startup so that it doesn't impact your system. It also restarts the backup if any task fails.

New! Enhanced NAS Support — Acronis True Image Home 2012 now supports Acronis' award winning Nonstop Backup technology to a network share. A Network Attached Storage (NAS) device is also suggested as a backup place when attached to the network.

Set&Forget™ — lets you configure your backups just once and then the software does the remembering for you. And one-click protection gives you a single-click shortcut to launch a pre-configured backup whenever you feel like it.

Improved! Acronis Nonstop Backup — Automatically starts incremental backups to multiple destinations, including Acronis Secure Zone®, allowing users to roll back their system, files and folders to any point in time

Acronis® True Image™ Online — provides 250 GB of secure Online Storage to save your precious data.

Live Backups — allows you to keep on working with no interruption during backups.

Other Key Features and Technologies

Windows-style interface — The improved sleek interface of this product works on Windows XP, Vista, and Windows 7.

Acronis Startup Recovery Manager — Boot and restore an entire PC system quickly without using an additional boot medium.

Time Explorer — Add comments to any backup and take advantage of Time Explorer screenshots that show exactly what your desktop looked like at the moment of the backup.

File Backup —Back up individual files, folders or file categories.

Privacy tools — Protect confidently private information with a thorough system cleaning and reliable data destruction of files, partitions, or volumes.

Set & Forget™ Backups — Once configured, backups can be performed automatically.

Incremental and differential backups — Choose backup types, which both capture the changes made since the last backup, and with Acronis data compression, both save disk space.

Image Encryption with AES — Protects your backup data with industry standard encryption security tools.

Enhanced! Extreme Media Versatility — Back up your files or system to almost any type of media imaginable, including DVDs, USB keys, external hard drives, GPT drives or NAS.

Virtual Hard Disk support — Convert Acronis' backup images (.tib) into virtual hard disk files (.vhd) and vice versa, allowing users to mount an image as a virtual disk and explore it. Windows 7 Ultimate users can also boot from .vhd images.

USB 3.0 standard — Gives you high-speed data transfer for all your critical safeguards, whether file backup or full PC backup.

One of the most outstanding features of Acronis True Image Home is its automaticity. Using this feature, I have it set to make a backup automatically every day at a given time every morning. I am never more than 24 hours behind a complete and full restoration of my complete hard drive or any of the individual files or folders thereon. I have elected to back up my drive by the differential (vs. the incremental) method and have it set to perform a differential backup daily and a complete full backup every two weeks. By whatever method you select its easy and automatic unattended with Acronis True Image Home. Of course, using Acronis True Image Home 12, you can also elect to use the continuous incremental backup feature which keeps you up-to-date all the time!

In the event of a total hard drive failure or booting problem, Acronis True Image Home has provided for you to create an emergency disk at the very outset that you can use to get your hard drive booted and then restore its backed-up contents. I can also transfer the entire contents of the drive on to a new drive in case I want to scrap the old. Acronis has spared no effort or function to get you operational in the event hard drive problem or disaster.

True Image Home 2012 is available to user group members at discount from Gene Barlow at www.ugr.com.

To order Acronis True Image Home 2012 from Gene at a user group discount, go to his secure web site at www.ugr.com/TrueImage.html and click on the appropriate Buy Now button to start the purchase. He offers single or multiple copies of the products in either download form or on a CD.

A single copy of True Image 2012 can be purchased from him for $25 as a download or just $5 more (for shipping) on a CD. This is less than half the normal list price of this excellent product. Visa, MasterCard, and Discovery credit cards are accepted. If you prefer to mail him a check for the products, you can place the order on his web site and indicate you will mail him a check. His special discount order code is UGTI2012.

Batch Image Converting With FastStone

**By Constance Brown, President, Canton/Alliance/Massillon Computer User Group, Ohio;
June 2011 issue, The Memory Map www.camug.com constanceb (at) camug.com**

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Last week I started a new blog where I am posting articles for quick reference with a special emphasis on free software. Our 6:00 special interest groups, also known as SIGS, are focusing on a range of free software this year. In May we discussed information on how to use FastStone to prepare a picture for print. Some of you may wish to review that information. Visit www.stepcotraining.wordpress.com and look at the May archives. As we discussed in the SIG and on the blog, commercial prints must be 300 dpi or more. However, email and websites present pictures entirely differently. In both cases you will want the smallest size picture possible that shows up attractively on a screen. Using 72 dpi is perfectly acceptable in these cases. A small picture size is also desirable. Let us take a look at some ways FastStone gives us the capability of resizing to smaller print sizes.

Often I wish to send or post several pictures at the same time. In order to do this quickly, I use "batch image convert" in FastStone. First I select all the pictures I wish to post to my web site, Facebook, or send via email. I like to copy all of these to one folder which, for sake of illustration, we shall name Web Selections May 2011 .

Then I create a folder inside the one I just created which, in this example, I will name Web Ready May 2011.

In this case there are three things I wish to accomplish: 1) Renaming each picture so that I lose no data from my original picture, 2) Resizing my picture for the purpose I wish to use it, and 3) Placing the re-sized pictures into their own folder. All three things can be accomplished quickly with FastStone. I will highlight all the pictures inside the folder titled Web Selections May 2011. Now I will click on Tools in the menu or on F3 and select Batch Convert Selected Images. The right half of the window that opens shows the images I have selected. Underneath this listing I can select the output format. When

I am posting to the web I always use jpeg, not jpeg 2000. Underneath the output format, I can choose the output folder by browsing to the folder I have already created—Web Ready May 2011.

Next I check the box titled, Use Advanced Options and click on the Advanced Options button. I check the box titled Resize and select a size. Using the drop down menu, I can pick a standard size. Usually 640 x 480 pixels is very good for email or Facebook.

Sometimes I have the need to resize based on a predefined side. To do that, click on the radio button titled Resize Based on One Side. Using the drop down menu, you can choose to have the long side or the short side of the picture resized to whatever you choose. This is really convenient when you are working with both portrait and landscape pictures. You can choose for the long side to be 640 pixels. That makes all the prints the same size regardless of which way they present.

Several other options are also available as you click the tabs across the top. Remember that whatever you select will be applied to all the pictures in the batch. If you choose to add text, all the pictures will have the same text applied to them. If you choose to rotate, all the pictures will rotate. The same thing applies to borders and watermarks. Once you have made your selections, click OK.

Now you are ready to rename the pictures. Underneath the box you checked to Use Advanced Options is a box to check to Rename. This feature is great. It allows you to name the new pictures so that nothing happens to the originals, which in this case, are larger files with much more captured information that you will need when you decide To make prints and enlargements. When you check Rename, the first option is Image####. I usually replace the word Image with something else but leave the # signs so that the images will be

numbered. Suppose I were posting pictures from a trip to Canada. I could rename as CANweb##### or Canada#####.

Now I am ready to click on Convert. My pictures will be renamed, resized, and placed in the folder that I have selected. What a time saver! I used to go through this process on each individual picture. When I needed many pictures for a web site, the process took hours!

Let me point out a few more of many really great features in FastStone. Printing contact sheets has always been a bit of a challenge. Not anymore! Suppose you just finished a photo shoot for your grandparents' 50th anniversary. The family wants to order photos and you need a contact sheet so they can select the photos they want. *Voila*!

Click on Create in your tool bar and select Contact Sheet Builder. You need to pay attention to all three tabs. The first one lets you select pictures from multiple folders. FYI, the name that is automatically assigned to the contact sheet is the name of the first folder that you select from which to pull pictures.

The second tab lets you determine background color, how many thumbnails you want to place on the page, and whether you wish to start a new page when you pull from a separate folder.

The third tab lets you preview the sheet you created. By the way, the output format is pdf, one of the file types that anyone can open if they have a free pdf reader.

Another option you will discover when you click on Create is the Slide Show builder. This is probably the easiest builder you will find anywhere. Just select the pictures by clicking Add File or Add Folder (perfect if you have your pictures organized), select a background color, select Loop if you want the slide show to play over and over again, choose to stretch small images if you wish—probably a good idea, either show or not show text (depends on how you have named the files), select from 156 transition effects or click on the three little dots and select ALL so that the effects change

from pictures to picture, browse to the music file you wish to play while the slide show runs, and select the quality and size of the pictures. Standard sizes are available at the click of the button and should be the same, if possible, as the screen you will use to view the show. Remember that projectors have size limits. If your projector has only an 800 x 600 and you will be presenting to a group using it, make the pictures for the slide show that same size.

Much more is available in this program, including cloning (copying from one part of a picture to another), shadow and highlight adjustments, as well as color, general lighting, and histogram adjustments, adding text to pictures, shrinking pictures to extremely small sizes or enlarging them beyond the size the camera actually took while maintaining excellent quality, special effects, and more.

I am pleased to tell you that you can download an excellent tutorial by visiting http://www.faststone.org/FSIVTutorial.ht.

The folks at faststone.org who continually improve this software are doing a fabulous job. I believe that this one piece of software will accomplish 85% of what the average user wants. Oh yes, it is also available as a portable program that operates from a flash drive. Now you can take the program on vacation and use it from the computer in your Favorite hotel without installing it on any computer!

Windows 8 – Exciting and Challenging

By John Pearce, Member, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, CO
March 12 issue, Bits and Bytes http://ppcompas.apcug.org glenihan (at) comcast.net

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The Microsoft Development Team for Windows 8 has been writing a blog about its development. The first post was in August, 2011; the frequency varies from a few days to a few weeks. I have often wondered why certain design decisions are made in the Windows OS. The blog attempts to discuss some of those issues as related to Windows 8. http://bit.ly/xlUCi

Based on what I have read in the Microsoft blog and in the computer trade press, I think Windows 8 will be both exciting and challenging. Windows 8 will run on legacy x32/64 hardware as well as the ARM processor found in tablets. The blog posting related to the ARM processor called this Windows on ARM or WOA.

You will have your choice of Windows 8 on a desktop, laptop, net book, ultra book, or tablet.

The look and feel of the Metro interface will be the same across all the hardware platforms. The difference is the physical control of the interface. If you want to use the touch interface with your desktop PC, you will need a touch enabled screen, otherwise you will still use the mouse. You can also revert to the old style desktop if you must.

In some ways, Windows 8 reminds me of the transition in Windows that happened with Win 2000. A benefit of melding the Windows 98/Me product line with the NT ¾ product line was a way to run games that wanted to have direct control of the display screen. The dark side of the Win 2K release required new drivers for devices because Microsoft changed how drivers interact with the OS.

Windows on ARM generally requires new code. Porting most of the existing applications is not allowed because the ported applications would negatively affect battery life and would require more system resources than programs developed specifically for WOA.

And there is the issue of designing the interface for Metro rather than the traditional Windows desktop.

The Windows Consumer Preview (otherwise known as a Win 8 beta release) was available by the end of February. The release is reported to be open to anyone who wishes to download and install the software. The hardware used to run the preview must meet the minimum requirements for Windows 7.

Microsoft is saying there is lots of work to do before the first release candidate is ready. There are few hints about the Windows 8 release schedule. It appears Microsoft is aiming for a grand slam event with Windows 8 on tablets (ARM processors) and on x32/64 hardware.

A Tablet Love Affair

By Roger Carlyle, Member, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA
May 2012 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News www.clickers.org ccnewsletter (at) cox.net

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Last year, like many folks, I thought Tablets were just a passing fad – used mostly by people who liked to play games, get recipes, or do online shopping. I was from the old school and staunchly declared that nothing could replace the desktop or laptop computer.

Any other form of computers were mere toys. Then it happened ever so subtly. I was slowly exposed to the Tablets. First seeing news media use them on national news shows and then an occasional Apple geek using them at local coffee shops. Curiosity got the best of me and I found myself reading more and more about Tablets. First on the internet and then seeing advertisements in local newspapers and on websites such as CNET, ZDNET, Newegg, etc. As a user of an iPod I soon realized the power and versatility of the Tablet . . . . and I fell in love and I wanted one.

After reading numerous tablet reviews and talking to several different tablet brand owners, I settled on getting an iPad 2 (lousy timing on my part — the New iPad was released three weeks after I purchased my iPad 2). Mostly because at the time Apple was the clear leader in Tablet technology and the number of Apps available for the iPad.

Another reason for choosing the iPad was for its 10" screen size. I wanted the larger screen for viewing videos and typing with the onscreen keyboard is much easier than on the smaller Tablet screens. Right out of the box it was love at first sight. I turned it on and found the initial setup to be very easy to use. Even a very novice computer user would find the setup and initial operation easy to follow.

I soon found myself settling into my plush reclining easy chair where I began exploring all the Apps available at the App Store. A large variety of Apps are free or .99¢ at the App Store. I was soon exploring the Internet, using email, taking pictures and making movies all with my new found tablet. I literally could not find anything that I could not do on my new Tablet that I did on my desktop computer. As a matter of fact there were things I could do on the Tablet that I could not do with my desktop. The only thing I go back to my desktop PC for is where heavy keyboard usage is required, such as producing the Cajun Clickers newsletter or doing intensive input into an Excel spreadsheet, etc.

Has owning a Tablet changed my life? Yes! I rarely get out of my plush recliner to go to my desktop PC. I do online shopping, check bank accounts, send videos to my distant friends and relatives, view live radar weather reports, read newspapers such as the Advocate, find recipes for my wife, read iBooks, and much, much more with my new iPad Tablet. And I can take it with me anywhere I go.

Based on personal experience and from the reviews I've read recently, my choice for a Tablet would be either the New iPad or the Samsung Galaxy Tab 10.1. Both are top performers and get five star reviews.

Samsung Galaxy 5.1

Apple iPad

The Tip Corner

By Bill Sheff, Novice SIG Coordinator, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA;
November 2011 issue, The LVCG Journal www.lvcg.org nsheff (at) aol.com

Fixing USB Hard Drives

Regardless of what kind of repair work you do, a good idea is start with the easiest and cheapest. So if you run into trouble with devices plugged into your computer via a USB cable... let's start with the cable.

Make sure there is a good connect ion. Remove and reinsert the cable into a different USB slot on the computer. Swap the cable for another USB cable.

Still not working? Double click My Computer in Windows XP or Computer in Windows Vista. The plugged USB hard drive is the removable disk on the list. Right click Properties and see if there is something wrong. If the drive is not listed turn the computer off. If the USB device is not recognized a message appears and unplug all other USB devices on the PC. These may not be compatible with the USB hard drive. Reboot the computer once all the other USB devices are disconnected.

Finally, if you are utilizing a USB hub, unplug the device and connect it directly to the USB port. If still not recognized or working the device unfortunately is that the hard drive is very likely defective.

Burning DVD Discs in Windows 7

First let's review the two different DVD formats there are. They are DVD- and DVD+. DVD- (dash) was developed by Pioneer in the late 1990's, while DVD+ was developed b by the DVD+RW alliance which includes Sony, HP, Ricoh, Yamaha, and others. Just note that all DVD burners now produced support both formats, which makes it easy for the consumer.

However, it should be noted that all things being equal the DVD dash burns slightly faster.

Whenever I mention a CD or DVD below it means either a dash or plus format. DVD-R formats are for a one time burn, while DVD-RW discs are used for both reading and writing data and can be formatted over and over again.

Today there are many types of multi-media files, including data, audio, and video, and each could require different ways to burn it to a DVD disc correctly.

We will discuss common file types, the disc format they should be created in, and the type of blank disc to use for best results.

For Home Videos (from a camcorder or downloaded video) they should be created with an Authoring software such as Windows DVD Maker in a DVD-Video project and it's recommended to use DVD-R media.

Digital Photo files can either be backed up using a standard DVD burning software as a data project or be created as a digital photo slideshow by using a compatible software using DVD-R media.

Most Recorded TV shows from Windows Media Center should be Authored with windows DVD Maker in a DVD-Video project and burned to DVD-R media.

Music or audio files can be burned to blank CD-R discs using Windows Media Player. However there are two ways to go about this: First you can create a standard Audio CD which usually holds 74 minutes of music by creating an audio project or you can burn mp3 files as a data project to get more music on a disc. (Just make sure you have a mp3 disc player for proper playback).

A recent burn I did holds 182 music files on one CD+ disc, and it plays in my car.

Disc Image Files or ISO files require Windows, Roxio or Nero Disc Image Burner to burn the format correctly on either a blank CD-R or DVD-R disc (it just depends on the file size).

Recording Home Videos to DVD

By utilizing the free Windows DVD Maker already included in Windows 7 installs you can simply and easily create home movie discs from your videos. The software will not make a Hollywood type film but will get you creating a DVD movie that you and your family can enjoy on your TV sets in the living room.

You simply start the software, load in some video that you captured off of your camcorder, create a custom DVD menu and burn away. You now have a DVD movie disc that you can watch on any standard DVD player.

Recording TV Shows to DVD Disc

In the old days, if your Windows PC came with a TV capture card you can hook up your cable line or satellite TV box and watch TV on your computer screen, but today with digital signals being encrypted you now need at least a separate cable box or DVR. If you use Windows Media Center you also have a built in DVR where you can record the shows you want. The best part is that you can also now burn them to a DVD disc and watch them on your TV set just like it was intended. To do this in Media Center all you do is insert a blank DVD, then click Burn CD/DVD and choose the Video DVD option. Then select a title name for the project and select the video clips or TV shows you want to burn from your media library and click the burn button. Media Center will handle the rest and give you a DVD disc that is properly formatted.

Sharing Digital Photos the Easy Way

One of the easiest ways to preserve, backup, and share your digital photos is to back them up to a blank CD-R or DVD. You can easily accomplish this by using Windows Explorer and choosing the Mastered format. All you do is insert a blank CD or DVD and on the AutoPlay box choose the "Burn files to disc using Windows Explorer" option. When the burn a disc dialog box opens choose a Disc Tit le and tick the With a CD/DVD player and click Next. Then simply browse to the digital photo folder you want to backup/burn and drag it into the empty disc folder. When ready to burn click the Burn to Disc box and you are good to go.

Burn a DVD From an Image File

If you come across an image file such as .iso you can watch it using Magic ISO or burn that image to a CD or DVD to see the contents in the file. Since .iso is a container for a file structure you need to extract it and by burning it to a disc will accomplish this. In Windows 7 you can use Windows Disc Image Burner. This is as easy as right clicking on the .iso file and choosing Burn Disc Image...yes it's that easy now in Windows 7.

(For some additional data take a look at BurnWorld.com and the article about burning music starting on page 9 in [the November issue of the LVCG Journal].)

One Column Excel Tip

If you ever prepared a spreadsheet that consisted of hundreds of lines and only one or two columns and then decided to print it out, can you do it without running through a ream of paper for just the one or two columns? Well, yeah! But don't look for a simple solution.

Actually, the simplest way is to copy your entire data table (all 100s of rows) to the Clipboard and paste it into Word. You can then format the information in Word to use columns and print as desired. (You can also place headers and footers on your data easier within Word than you can in Excel.)
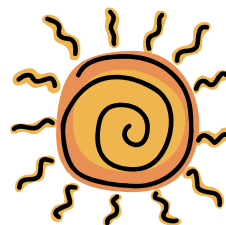
But if you are a purest and want to do it in Excel here are a couple of ways to print the data in columns on a single sheet of paper.

Let's assume you have data that is only one column wide by 100 rows deep.)

1. In cell B2, enter the formula "=A26".
2. In cell C2, enter the formula "=A51".
3. In cell D2, enter the formula "=A76".
4. Copy cells B2:D2 down to row 25.

Your data is now in four columns, without the original data being disturbed. Format your columns to the necessary width, place a page break just before row 26, and print just the first page of your data. You can also save the file as a template for future single column files.

Another approach is to copy the row and column(s) to a different worksheet. This is quick and easy to do using the keyboard (Ctrl+C to copy and Ctrl+V to paste), but there is a drawback. If the row or column you are copying contains formulas that rely on other areas of the worksheet, the copied data may not show the proper results. Thus, the best "cut and paste" approach would be to use the Paste Values command rather than just Paste.

Power USB

By Clint Tinsley, Editor, Idaho PCUG
December 2011 issue, Bits and Pieces http://idahopcug.apcug.org c_tinsley (at) msn.com

In a presentation to the IPCUG a couple months back, I touched on some considerations in using the USB (Universal Serial Bus) connectors on your computer. This article will reinforce the points I made in that presentation but will go much further.

First, let's talk about the laptop as the new desktop computer. The laptop offers many things a desktop system doesn't offer out-of-box, such as webcam, built in speakers, touch pad, keyboard, and monitor, all in a package that is powerful, highly useful, and portable. However, one downside is that most all connections to the laptop are made using its USB Ports which are generally few in number, typically 3. I have a new netbook that only has 2 USB ports.
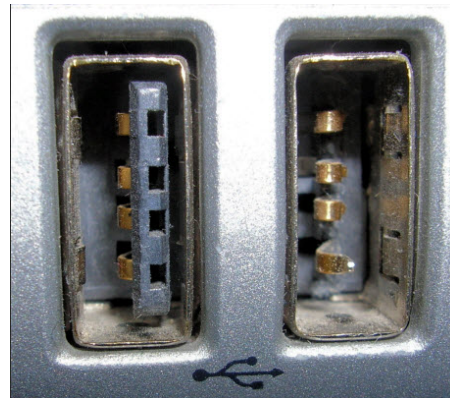
As an example desktop system and how I use USB, my work-at-home desktop computer is a HP ProBook 6455b, a small 14" notebook, standard keyboard without a keypad, and 3 USB ports. I have no less than 6 devices that must connect via USB for work.

1) Wireless Full sized Keyboard/Mouse

2) 2nd Display Monitor Adapter

3) USB Active Key for VPN Network Access

4) USB Powered Speakers

5) USB Powered Chiller Pad to keep the PC Cool.

6) USB Storage device.

With only 3 ports, I have to use 4 port hubs on one of the ports to connect to items 3 through 6. And I am still not done with devices I might need to connect such as a second DVD drive, card reader, or tablet. There are three things that need to be considered in using USB ports, damage control, USB power, and USB port speed, which I will cover in that order.

Damage Control

Shown [below] are the 2 USB ports on one of my laptops. One is usable, one is obviously not! The left port is still good and normal in appearance. The right port is unusable due to the connector material being busted out and the 4 connectors hanging out in space; I don't know how this happened but I strongly suspect that something plugged into that port was struck hard enough to break it.

I really recommend against plugging any large sized devices into the USB ports that could damage the ports if accidentally struck or leaned on, which can also damage the internals of the computer. The picture below shows a short extension cable that can greatly reduce that kind of damage from occurring.

Power Management

The USB 2.0 specification limits the current available per port to 500 mA, or .5A, which is half an amp of current. This is not enough current to run some USB devices such as USB DVD Drives and External Hard Drives, even the "pocket" sized ones. Vendors of hubs, DVD drives and USB drives get around this power limitation supplying a cable that uses 2 USB Ports on your laptop, one for data/power and second for power in order to provide enough power for the device itself and anything else that might be plugged into it. In well-designed laptops, each USB port is supposed to be limited by a Vbus power controller, isolating the 5V on the USB port from the laptop, providing some protection to the computer, but this may not be the case in all laptops and further damage or overheating can occur. The solution to this problem is the use of an externally powered USB hub that has its own AC power supply. Unfortunately, many USB hubs don't come with a power supply even though they have a jack for which to plug in a power supply. One such 7 port hub I showed at the meeting is the Ativa® Mobil-IT™ 7-Port USB 2.0 Desktop Hub with a 3.5 amp power supply (Seven times .5A!), which I had purchased at Office Depot for $25.99 (SKU 196179). A search of Amazon reveals a number of 4 to 7 port USB hubs with power supplies from a few dollars on up. It is very important that when buying a USB Hub is to make sure it comes with its own power supply.

USB Speed or The Need For Speed!

You may be fortunate enough to get one of the new laptops with a 3.0 USB port. These new ports are capable of speeds up to 5 GB/second! Compare that to 480Mbps for high speed 2.0 ports and down to 12 Mbps for legacy 1.1 ports on older computers. Note that the 480MBs is a per port specification and when you connect a hub into a USB port and depending on the devices plugged into hub, overall speed through the hub is limited to 480 Mbps, so don't try to play a DVD, use an USB Hard Drive, and a thumb drive, all at the same time. If you shop around and get one of the new 3.0 hubs with an external power supply, you will be blessed with great speed on all the ports, just make sure you plug it into a 3.0 port on your laptop. My personal laptop has 4 USB ports, the two 3.0 ports which

are distinguished by a dark blue colored insulation material on the contacts (such as in the picture below). The 2.0 ports have a black insulation material. One other advantage of using powered hubs is that they can be used to charge up USB devices like MP3 players without having to turn on a computer or leave it on just to charge a device.

StarTech.com 4 Port Black
SuperSpeed USB 3.0 Hub
$42 (with Power Supply)

PATACS Ed. Note: from UGR Gene Barlow's recent newsletter, available at
http://www.ugr.com/NewsletterRegistration.html

"Acronis normally announces a new version of their True Image backup product in the Fall of the year, usually September or October. Since I am not an employee of Acronis, they do not share their announce dates with me. But, after representing them for many years, I have come to understand how they typically handle product announcements. With a new release of True Image coming in just a few short months, many of you may put off purchasing the Acronis backup utility and your files risk loss in a hard drive crash. So, our Summer Special is to give you a free upgrade to the new True Image 2013 due out this Fall. This special is limited to just those that purchase the current True Image 2012 from us this summer (June 1 to August 31). As soon as the new version is announced, we will email you on how to request your free upgrade to the new True Image 2013. So, order now to start to protect your files and know you will be getting a new release this Fall when it becomes available."

Say No Thank You to New Toolbar — Opt Out During the Installation Process

By Leo Notenboom, Ask Leo
Article Source: http://articlesbyleo.com

Obtained from APCUG Nov. 2011 with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups

Have you ever had a new toolbar suddenly "appear" in your browser? Although it might not seem like you agreed to install it, the likelihood is that you did.

One of the most frustrating strategies companies use to deploy more toolbars relies on your not paying close attention when installing software or other programs on your computer.

For example, let's say you're installing an update to the popular Java runtime, which is software used by some websites to provide rich functionality beyond just displaying static pages.

The update consists of the normal installation program, and then proceeds to ask you the normal installation things, including agreeing to the software license.

Then another screen comes up and without reading it you're about to click Next.

Wait!

In doing so you would have been asking to have the Yahoo! toolbar installed.

Nothing against Yahoo, Java or Sun here, but this can be very annoying. It's not that the Yahoo toolbar is bad. It's actually a fine toolbar. The annoying part is this:

- The offer appears during an update- you'd already made your selection when you initially installed the program, there's no need to ask again.

- It defaults to "Yes". Anything optional, particularly anything totally unrelated to what is being installed, should default to off.

- They're "sneaking it in". OK, this is really subjective, but you can't help but feel like this might be an attempt to sneak the installation in, during a process where people are usually just hitting Next repeatedly to get the install over with.

This installation is not the only case. During installation of many software packages - both initial installs and updates - the option to install a toolbar will often be selected by default. You have to click a box to opt out. This choice typically comes during the middle of the process when you're conditioned to hitting "next" just get it over with. If you're not paying attention once you're done suddenly a new toolbar will "appear." A toolbar you didn't realize you had actually agreed to.

Typically, installers include this option to earn profit. It's a way for those offering free software to recoup some of the cost. But this habit certainly shows up in paid for software as well.

This tactic is a perfect example of why it is important to pay attention during installations and updates. Read each step before clicking next or you might find you're about to "ask" for something you didn't really want at all.

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Backups and Archiving

Saturday, July 28 & Sunday, July 29, 2 p.m.
Multiboot and Virtual Machines

Saturday, Aug. 4 & Sunday, Aug. 5, 2 p.m.
Microsoft® Excel® Tips & Tricks

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Posts is an official publication of the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS), a Virginia membership corporation. PATACS is a tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are gratefully received and tax deductible.

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If you are moving

Please send your change of address to the club address as soon as possible to avoid missing issues.

                             Thank You!

Upcoming Meetings

July 21st, (3rd Sat) at 1 PM, Fairfax
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax, VA 22032
joint meeting with OPCUG

Demonstration and Discussion of Windows 8 —
      Clay Robinson
Learn 30: Dropbox: Cloud File Storage —
      Bill Walsh

July 25th (4th Weds) at 7 PM, Arlington
Walter Reed Community Center
2909 S. 16th Street, Arlington, VA 22203

Troubleshooting Session;
Tech Toys — bring yours to show the gang.

Pizza & Salad SIG follows at Mama's Pizza,
corner South Glebe Road & Columbia Pike

PATACS Meeting Information

Call 703-370-7649 for meeting announcements or visit web site at http://www.patacs.org/

Free Admission — Bring a Friend!

Arlington Meetings
(temporary location through August or
September 2012 — please check website)

Walter Reed Community Center
2909 S. 16th St, Arlington VA 22203
http://www.patacs.org/arlingtonmeetings.html

General Meeting
1st Wednesday (8/1) 7pm

Internet Special Interest Group (SIG)
4th Wednesday (8/22) 7pm

Board of Directors
3rd Monday (8/20) 7pm

Fairfax Meetings
(with OLLI PC User Group)

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)
4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax VA 22032
http://www.patacs.org/fairfaxmeetings.html

General Meeting
3rd Saturday (8/18) 12:30pm

Online-Only Webinar using Skype
2nd Wednesday (8/8) 7-9pm
http://www.patacs.org/webinarpat.html

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