

Useful Bits & Pieces

by Lorrin R. Garson

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Open Garden

Open Garden has nothing to do with horticulture. It's a technology that interconnects devices such as smartphones, laptops and tablets to form a wireless peer-to-peer mesh network for access to the Internet. For example, by installing Open Garden on your cell phone and laptop (PC and Mac), your laptop has access to the Internet via your phone when WiFi hot spots are not available. If others have Open Garden installed on their devices you would all share connectivity and bandwidth. It is the digital equivalent of grazing on the commons. Open Garden provides an "automatic path choice." When the software detects multiple Internet connections, it will select the fastest one available and will switch to another connection if the original slows or goes off line. The advantage is that it can offload traffic from an overburdened access route to one less utilized, say from a 3G or 4G connection to an enabled WiFi connection. Currently Open Garden is available for Android, Windows, and Macintosh operating systems. An iOS version (for the iPhone) is planned for the future. In principal widespread deployment of this technology could reduce capital expenditures for wireless carriers

such as Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, etc. by transferring traffic from their cellular circuits to WiFi. However, the carriers might revolt if they perceive they will lose revenue that is not made up by lower capital investments. It is a complex business situation and no one knows at this time how the cell phone companies will react or if consumers will adopt Open Garden. For more information see <http://opengarden.com/>, <http://opengarden.net/> and <http://opengarden.com/story.php>.

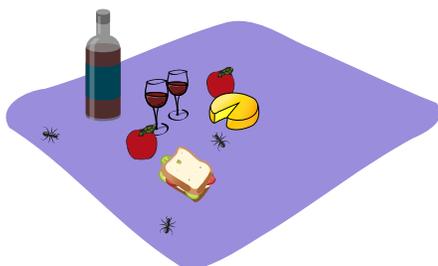
Improving PC Performance by Adding Memory

Increasing the amount of memory in your PC is the simplest and least expensive way to improve performance. The procedure is quite simple even for those who are hardware challenged. These instructions pertain to desktop PCs, although adding or changing memory in laptops is similar (see <http://www.wikihow.com/Upgrade-Your-Laptop%27s-RAM-Memory>).

1. Determine how much memory is currently in your computer (instructions for Windows 7) by: left-click on Start, right-click on Computer, then left-click on Properties. Under System will be a line "Installed memory (RAM)".
2. Determine how many memory slots are available in your computer. This can be done

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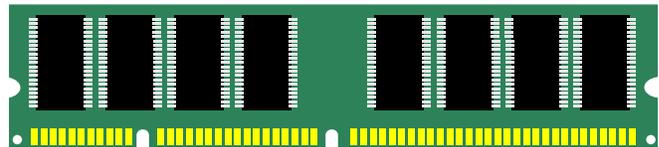
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- by consulting your PC owner's manual, opening up your computer for inspection (more on this later), or using one of the tools such as that available from Crucial.com (see below).
3. Determine how much memory you need. This is rather subjective. Many will advise "you can't have too much memory", but 4-8 GB is probably adequate for most people. 12-16 GB or more may be advisable for those doing video or photo editing. For those playing computer games or doing heavy duty processing, the more the better.
 4. Determine the correct memory needed for your computer. Again, this information should be available in your PC owner's manual. For example, for the HP Pavilion HPE h8xt the memory specified is SO-DIMM, 204-pin DDR3-DIMM, PC3-10600 (1333 MHz) DDR3-SDRAM, Unbuffered, non-EC (64-bit) DIMMs, 1.5 V memory only. It is crucial that you buy the correct memory; there are many kinds of memory (DDR, DDR2, DDR3, RDRAM, SDRAM, etc.) sold by numerous vendors (Amazon, Newegg, TigerDirect, Micro Center, etc.) including some manufacturers. Companies that sell memory will sometimes provide a tool you can download that will tell you the type of memory your computer uses, the number of memory slots available on your machine, etc. For example see Crucial.com at <http://www.crucial.com/store/drammemory.aspx>. It is generally advisable to use exactly the same brand, model with the precise specifications for all memory rather than just add additional memory.
 5. Installing the memory.
 - a. Unplug everything from the computer, although some recommend leaving the power cord plugged in to ground the computer, but be certain the computer is not running.
 - b. Be sure to ground yourself to the computer case before working on the machine. Static electricity can seriously damage components of your computer. It is preferable to use an antistatic wrist strap for this purpose (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antistatic_wrist_strap). These devices are quite inexpensive.
 - c. Open up the computer's case. This will be somewhat different for every machine. Sometimes a screw driver will be needed.
 - d. Locate the memory module(s) and carefully remove them, assuming they are being replaced. Some memory cards have clips at the ends while others tilt forward or backward to remove. Look carefully and go gently.
 - e. Snap the new memory module(s) in place taking care to seat them correctly. Apply pressure evenly across the width of module. Often you will hear a "click" as the module is seated.
 - f. Close up the computer and reattach all the peripherals.
 - g. Boot up the computer and check to verify (step #1) that the computer "sees" all the memory you installed.
 6. See <http://www.microsoft.com/athome/setup/addmemory.aspx#fbid=jzzxbLYldz7> for useful information on this topic from Microsoft.



Tell Us About It!

Got a new tech device? Tried a new App or have one that you can't live without? Found a solution to a tech problem?

Help and inform your fellow members by writing a few paragraphs about it for this newsletter! It doesn't require a lot of writing or a degree in journalism, just a short description of why you wanted it, cost (if any), where you got it and whether or not it met your needs.

Users helping users is what we are all about!

Linux and Open Source News

by Geof Goodrum

Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society
linux(at)patacs.org

There and Back Again: Distro Hopping

I started using the Ubuntu 12.04 GNU/Linux distribution

(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linux_distribution) on my then-new HP Pavilion g6 laptop while 12.04 was still in beta release. Ubuntu 12.04 was stable, worked well, and even supported the 802.11n wireless network adapter on the laptop without any fuss. As a Ubuntu Long Term Support (LTS) release, the publisher Canonical Ltd will provide updates for five years. However, in January I was tempted to try the newest Ubuntu release, 12.10. Canonical received some bad press with the 12.10 release because the desktop search application passes queries to Amazon.com for online results by default, and Canonical receives a monetary credit for any Amazon purchases made through the feature. The privacy concerns with 12.10 and how to address them are documented in the Electronic Frontier Foundation article at <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2012/10/privacy-ubuntu-1210-amazon-ads-and-data-leaks>.

However, I wanted to keep up with the latest features, so I installed Ubuntu 12.10 and made the appropriate privacy settings, but encountered chronic pop-up error messages with requests to submit bug reports to Canonical. I also realized that a couple of applications that I liked on 12.04 were not available on 12.10. Although relatively minor annoyances, I was bothered more by Canonical taking Ubuntu more commercial and snubbing community projects. Similar to its development of the Unity interface for Ubuntu, Canonical announced in early March that it would develop its own display server Mir instead of working with the Open Source community on Wayland, the favored replacement for the venerable X Window System (see http://www.theregister.co.uk/2013/03/05/canonical_mir_announcement/).

I decided I wanted a GNU/Linux distribution that was more community-based, and preferably one following a rolling release model (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolling_release), which basically means install it once and upgrade incrementally thereafter. I thought I found it in Linux Mint Debian Edition (LMDE, http://www.linuxmint.com/download_lmde.php). LMDE is based on the community-supported Debian GNU/Linux distribution “Testing” release (unlike the more common Linux Mint based upon Ubuntu releases). At the time, the install image was dated April 2012 (a March 2013 release is now available), so after installation it took some time to download and install many updates (an automated process). LMDE includes the MATE and Cinnamon user interfaces common with its Ubuntu-based releases, but I found these rather old-school and wanted to try the new Gnome 3.x shell interface. Unfortunately, I couldn’t enable the native Gnome shell interface, found other software was rather old (Google prompted me to upgrade the Chromium browser), and LMDE did not support the ecryptfs-encrypted home directory left over from my Ubuntu install without some effort on my part. I lost patience with LMDE just as Canonical announced an updated release of Ubuntu 12.04.2.

I installed Ubuntu 12.04.2, but encountered problems that I never had with the original 12.04 release. The worst was my laptop would not suspend reliably when I closed the lid. The screen sometimes flashed between white and black but never resumed the session, requiring me to power off to recover. The Microsoft Windows software compatibility layer, WINE (<http://www.winehq.org/>), also had an installation bug that broke the entire system. While I filed bug reports on these, I was not happy.

So I am now installing the Gentoo GNU/Linux distribution (<http://www.gentoo.org/>) on the laptop. I’ve used Gentoo since 2005 on my desktop computer (after previous experience with Slackware, Red Hat, Fedora Core/Fedora, and Mandrake/Mandriva). Gentoo is not a distribution that I recommend to newcomers

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unless they have lots of patience and a desire to jump into the technical deep-end to learn Linux. On the other hand, Gentoo is a true rolling release, community-supported, source-based distribution (i.e., the operating system and applications are compiled from original source code) that gives me complete control over what software features to include (minimizing bloat, improving security) and optimizations specific to the hardware (maximizing performance). Even with my previous Gentoo experience, its taking time to learn the specific settings to get the most out of my laptop.

In my case, “distro hopping” has been somewhat frustrating, but its also a valuable learning experience about the strengths and weaknesses of other distributions and the best way for a new user to find a GNU/Linux distribution that’s just the right fit for his/her needs. Since most distributions are free downloads and many can be run directly from USB flash drives or CD/DVD without modifying the current operating system, its worth giving other distributions a try occasionally. Visit <http://distrowatch.com/> for a comprehensive and up-to-date database of GNU/Linux distributions.

Featured Linux Software of the Month: May 2013

The software described below can be downloaded at the links provided or copied onto a USB flash drive at the PATACS Fairfax meeting. However, please check the online package management tool included with your GNU/Linux distribution first, as installation is often just a click away.

Darktable – v1.1.4. <http://www.darktable.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executable packages for Ubuntu, Fedora, Arch, openSUSE, Gentoo, and MacOSX by Johannes Hanika, Henrik Andersson, Tobias Ellinghaus, Pascal de Bruijn, et al.. darktable is an open source photography workflow application and RAW image developer—a virtual lighttable and darkroom for photographers. It manages your digital negatives in a database, lets you view them through a zoomable lighttable and enables you to develop raw images and enhance them.

Features:

- darktable runs on GNU/Linux / GNOME, Mac OS X / macports and Solaris 11 / GNOME.
- Fully non-destructive editing.
- All darktable core functions operate on 4x32-bit floating point pixel buffers, enabling SSE instructions for speedups. It offers GPU acceleration via OpenCL (runtime detection and enabling) and has built-in ICC profile support: sRGB, Adobe RGB, XYZ and linear RGB.
- A collect module allows you to execute flexible database queries, search your images by tags, image rating (stars), color labels and many more. Filtering and sorting your collections within the base query or simple tagging by related tags are useful tools in your every-day photo workflow.
- Import a variety of standard, raw and high dynamic range image formats (e.g. jpg, cr2, hdr, pfm, ..).
- darktable has a zero-latency fullscreen, zoomable user interface through multi-level software caches.
- Tethered shooting.
- darktable currently comes with 18 translations: Albanian, Catalan, simplified Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Ukrainian and Thai.
- The powerful export system supports Picasa webalbum, flickr upload, disk storage, 1:1 copy, email attachments and can generate a simple html-based web gallery. darktable allows you to export to low dynamic range (JPEG, PNG, TIFF), 16-bit (PPM, TIFF), or linear high dynamic range (PFM, EXR) images.
- darktable uses both XMP sidecar files as well as its fast database for saving metadata and processing settings. All Exif data is read and written using libexiv2.

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Frogatto & Friends – v1.3.

<http://www.frogatto.com/>. Free GNU General Public License C++ source code and executable packages with non-commercial use data for Debian Linux, Windows, MacOSX, Blackberry Playbook, Apple iPhone, and OpenPandora by David White, Richard Kettering, Guido Bos, Ryan Reilly, Adam Rinsky, et al. An old-school 2D platformer game, starring a certain quixotic frog. Frogatto has gorgeous, high-end pixel art, pumping arcade tunes, and all the gameplay nuance of a classic console title. Run and jump over pits and enemies. Grab enemies with your tongue, swallow them, and then spit them out at other enemies as projectiles! Fight dangerous bosses, and solve vexing puzzles. Collect coins and use them to buy upgrades and new abilities in the store. Talk to characters in game, and work to unravel Big Bad Milgram's plot against the townsfolk! At over 30 levels set in 4 different environments, Frogatto has the play-time you'd expect from a commercial videogame.

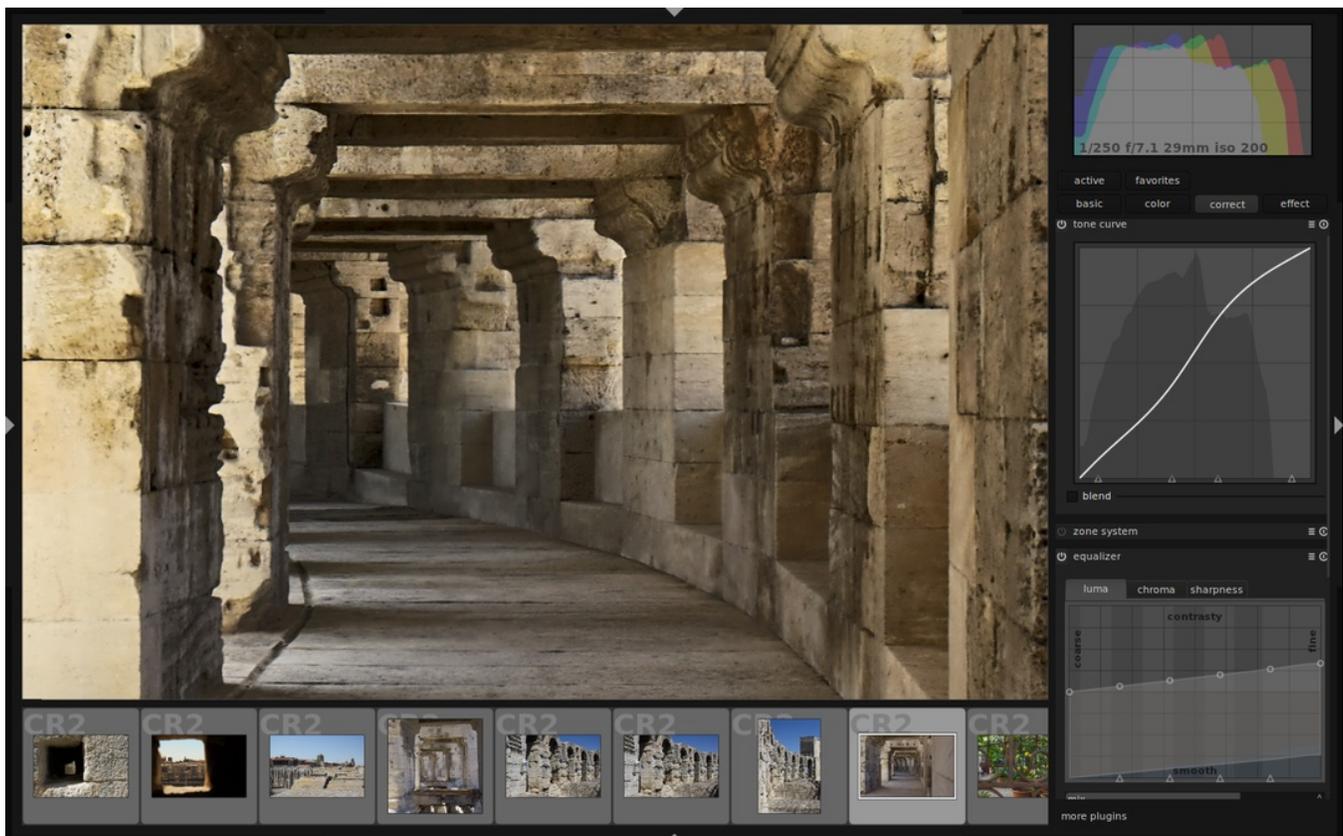
PeaZip – v4.9.1. <http://peazip.sourceforge.net/>.

Free GNU Lesser General Public License source code and executable packages for Microsoft Windows 9x through 8, RPM, TGZ and DEB-based Linux distributions by Giorgio Tani. PeaZip is a cross-platform file archiver utility that provides a unified portable GUI for many open source technologies like 7-Zip, FreeArc, PAQ, UPX, etc. Creates 7Z, ARC, BZ2, GZ, *PAQ, PEA, QUAD/BALZ, TAR, UPX, WIM, XZ, and ZIP files. It extracts more than 150 archive types: ACE, ARJ, CAB, DMG, ISO, LHA, RAR, UDF, ZIPX, and more. Features of PeaZip include extracting, creating, and converting multiple archives at once, creating self-extracting archives, split/join files, strong encryption with two factor authentication, an encrypted password manager, secure deletion, find duplicate files, calculate hashes, and export job definitions as scripts.

Kernel Source – v3.8.5. <http://www.kernel.org/>.

Free GNU General Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.

Below: darktable's darkroom mode, sharpening an image



Back Again—Phone Scammers Want to Hijack Your Computer

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://www.microsoft.com/security/online-privacy/avoid-phone-scams.aspx>

http://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/windows_vista-security/scam-phone-call-claiming-to-be-from-windows/193f0a33-4ad9-4a07-96eb-9a7e3debb269

http://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/windows_xp-security/phone-call-scam-received-call-from-a-technician/6ed2b99c-20ff-468b-a69b-aec78b93f287

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2011/06/16/tech-support_scam_calls/

<http://windowssecrets.com/top-story/watch-out-for-microsoft-tech-support-scams/>

https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov/FTC_Wizard.aspx?lang=en

Early last year, I wrote a column warning that telephone scammers, claiming to be from Microsoft, were calling local people, informing them that their computers were infected with malware. The rip-off had seemed to be somewhat dormant for several months, with only occasional inquiries from people asking about a phone call from Microsoft, Norton-Symantec, McAfee, or their ISP alleging that their computers were infected, and that for a fee and with remote access, they could repair the computer. During a few week period in late 2011, I heard from many people that they had received such calls, but for the last 15 months, I only received an occasional inquiry. Now, in just the last few days, I have received several such calls and emails indicating that either by plan or coincidence, local computer users are again receiving those calls in quantity.

Last Friday evening, I received a frantic phone call from an acquaintance indicating that he and his wife had received a half-dozen calls over the past few hours, many irate, from foreign accented individuals claiming to be from Microsoft. These “Microsoft employees” needed

immediate remote access to stop the victim’s computer from spreading malware, and that Microsoft had detected hundreds of viruses and other malware coming from their PC! Demanding that they, the crooks, needed to take immediate remote control of the victim’s computer, in order to prevent the spread of computer viruses. The first polite request was denied, followed a short time later by a second telephone request, also denied. The third telephone request was somewhat irate, demanding immediate access to the victim’s computer. A fourth, fifth, and sixth call over a period of a few hours became much more irate and belligerent, demanding immediate access. The distraught victim then phoned me, asking if Microsoft really needed to take control of his computer in order to clean off viruses; I told him no, that this was a well documented scam, and to simply hang up on them if they called again.

Later Friday evening, I received an email from another friend, “Is there a scam going on with someone calling on the phone to notify us that there has been a problem on my computer, and that they can directly connect into all Windows users?” I replied promptly, that this was also a scam. Saturday afternoon, I received a phone call on one of my digital phone lines that has an unpublished number that I had never given to anyone outside of my immediate family. This call showed no name on the caller ID, but appeared to be from the 559 area code (Fresno area of California). The caller had an unusual accent, and the voice quality sounded like it was a foreign call. A quick check indicated that the call was possibly a VoIP (internet relayed digital call) coming through a node near Fresno, and then on to the domestic phone network. While I have no empirical evidence to prove it, I would make an educated guess that the call originated from Nigeria, a common source of this and many other Internet scams. Similar scams have been traced to India, Pakistan, the Philippines, China, Vietnam, Russia, and other south Asian countries.

Being fully cognizant of the nature of the scam, I decided to play along with it. This very polite

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gentleman, with the foreign accent, informed me that he worked for Microsoft, and that Microsoft had detected that my computer was responsible for infecting other computers with several viruses. Very kindly, he offered to perform a remote security scan on my computer if I would only allow him to remotely access it. Trying hard to sound somewhat cyber illiterate, I asked him how he could remotely perform a scan, and he told me that all I had to do was click on my Windows 7 icon (orb) on the bottom left of my screen, or click on the "Microsoft Menu" key on the bottom left of my keyboard, and then follow his instructions. Pretending to be somewhat unsure of myself, I had him walk me through the process; open my menu, and then click on Control Panel, then System, then click on "Remote Settings" on the left side of the window. When the next window opened, he instructed me to click on the remote tab, and then to check the box "Allow remote assistance connections to this computer". I hesitated, telling him that I was not comfortable doing this, and in a reassuring voice akin to the classical "Trust Me" ruse, he assured me that all that he was going to do was a comprehensive virus scan on my computer to verify that it really was my computer that was broadcasting viruses to other computers. Knowing what would be coming next, I asked him if his virus scan would remove the viruses for me. Very politely he responded no, that this was just a virus scan, but for a "nominal fee" he could remove any viruses that he found from my computer. A follow up inquiry disclosed that this "nominal fee" was \$69.95 charged to a credit card number that I would give him over the phone. I told him "no thanks", but before I could hang up the phone, he pleaded with me to trust him, and allow him remote access to my computer. With a stern "NO!", I hung up the phone.

This was not just some isolated or random event; in the past few days another co-worker received a series of similar phone calls in his office from a very persistent caller who would not take "no" for an answer. Shortly after hanging up on him, he called back again, with the same response. A few minutes later, he called back very angry,

demanding remote access to his work computer, which was duly refused. Moments later, someone claiming to be a "supervisor" demanded access "right now" to his computer; he called me over to talk to the scammer. The "supervisor" said that he was with Microsoft in India, and that it was mandatory that I give him remote access to this computer immediately. My curt refusal was met with a somewhat threatening reply that I would be in trouble for refusing him remote access to this computer, and that I would regret it.

According to those that have fallen victim to this crude scam, the repeated scenario is the crook asks the victim to allow him remote access to the victim's computer by clicking on some Window's commands, allowing the crook complete remote access and control of the computer. Once the crook has control of the victim's computer, he regretfully informs the victim that his computer is heavily infested with malware, and that for a fee, typically \$69.95 (but it may vary greatly), he can clean the computer and return control to the victim. What the cyber-thief does not say is that while he is performing the security scan on the computer, he is likely to download (steal) documents, spreadsheets, personal information, emails, address books, password files, and other valuable data from the computer. It is also not uncommon for the bad guys to install malware such as keyloggers and screen capture utilities to steal usernames and passwords for the purpose of identity theft. If a credit card number, expiration date, and CVV security code are given to clean the computer, not just is the card charged for the service (often for much more than the agreed upon price), but the credit card information also often appears for sale on the illicit websites selling credit card numbers.

The number of people victimized by this scam may be much larger than previously known. According to a report on this scam, published June 16, 2011 in "The Register" (UK), "The software giant (Microsoft) surveyed 7,000 computer users in the UK, Ireland, US and Canada and found an average of 16 per cent of people had received such calls. In Ireland this

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rose to a staggering 26 per cent.” Personal losses can be quite dramatic for those victimized by this and similar scams. In this same report, “(Microsoft) said 79 per cent of those tricked suffered financial loss – the average loss was \$875 (£542). Losses ranged from just \$82 (£51) in Ireland to a whopping \$1,560 (£967) in Canada.” (Source:theregister.co.uk/2011/06/16/tech_support_scam_calls)

Scams such as these have been around for several years, and reputable organizations, news services, and blogs have been warning about them. In several locations, Microsoft has emphatically stated, “Neither Microsoft nor our partners make unsolicited phone calls (also known as cold calls) to charge you for computer security or software fixes.” (Source: www.microsoft.com/security/online-privacy/avoid-phone-scams.aspx). Be especially aware if a person over the phone offers to remotely install “genuine” Microsoft security software for a fee, since Microsoft makes this same software available to anyone for free.

If you are one of the many victims of this scam, Microsoft and others have published a series of recommendations to follow. First, if you gave the crook your credit card number, immediately contact your credit card company using the 800 number on the back of your card, and cancel your card, requesting a new one. Over the phone, the customer service representative can list your recent charges, and may give you an opportunity to question them right away. Look carefully at any recent charges on your online or paper statement, and challenge any illicit or unknown charges with the credit card company. Next, perform a complete security scan of your computer using security scanners other than the security software already installed on your computer. Since your current security scanner and protective software may have been neutralized by the cyber crook, perform a scan with one of the major third party security scanners; my personal favorites are the free versions of SuperAntiSpyware (superantispyware.com) and MalwareBytes (malwarebytes.org). Once your computer has

been satisfactorily cleaned of any malware that the scammer may have installed, it may be necessary to reinstall your security software. Change the password that you use to logon to your computer, and any other passwords that you use to access your email, financial accounts (including banks and credit cards, as well as such services as PayPal), online retailers (including eBay), and any other passwords that you may have used. After doing what you can to mitigate the damage done, consider filing a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission using the “Complaint Assistant” at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov.

Please, do not fall victim to this scam which is again targeting mainly local residents. If “Knowledge is Power”, then now you have the power to protect yourself from this and similar scams.



Outlook.com

by Lynn Page

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December 2012 issue, CRUG newsletter
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Microsoft has upgraded Hotmail and Windows Live to a new Outlook.com cloud email service. My accounts were just ‘upgraded’ this week. It is always hard to make changes so I will let you know what I have seen.

The introductory email has links to get started with Outlook where you can read information about the service, get a new email address, connect your account with your social media accounts and provide feedback. I have more than enough email addresses to keep track of and don’t want to connect my email with my Facebook accounts so didn’t even look at those options.

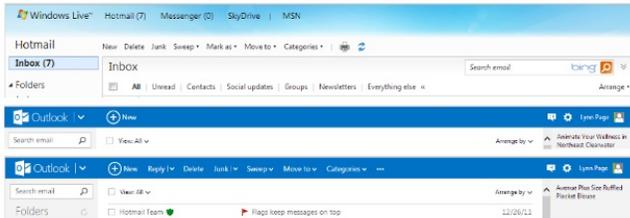
Interface

The Outlook interface has been streamlined from the Hotmail interface. It looks cleaner and takes less screen space. That can be important if you are checking email from a small portable device.

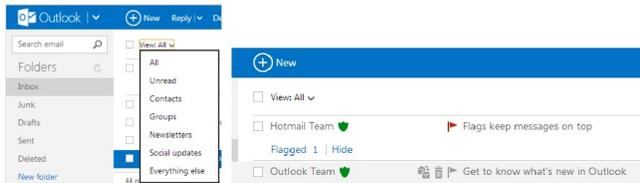
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One notable feature is that the menu bar only shows message items when an email or emails have been selected. Without that the only item is the New Message icon.

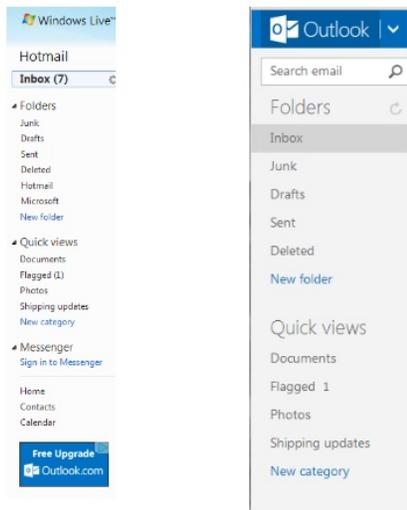


Further streamlining is seen in the filtering options. In Outlook to filter messages, click View All and select a filter category.



Another nice feature is the set of icons that are displayed when you mouse over a message. Click the icon to reply to, trash or flag the message.

Outlook Folders and Quick Views are the same as in Hotmail. You can define rules to automatically handle messages as they come in like flagging messages, moving them to folders and setting alerts for your mobile phone. Quick

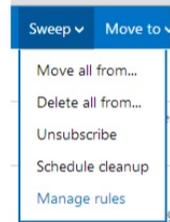


Views automatically sorts and shows items by category.

Cleaning up

I try to keep my Inbox, Sent and Deleted folders clean. This means that I either delete email from my Inbox or save to an offline folder on a regular basis. I also delete Sent emails and empty the Deleted folder ever few days. If you don't want to take care of this yourself use Sweep or schedule a

cleanup. Sweep works based on the email sender. Schedule a cleanup lets you select to keep only the latest email from a sender and delete the rest, delete all messages after 10 days or move them to a selected folder. Sweep can also delete emails in bulk from multiple senders, cleaning out hundreds of emails in seconds. It will also move all email from a sender to a specified folder.



If you tend to subscribe to every newsletter that comes along only to find out you don't read them Unsubscribe is great feature.

Set simple rules in Sweep to automatically file emails from specific senders to a folder of your choice. The email won't even go to the inbox. Sweep lets you file emails straight to a folder automatically based on the sender's email address.

Office Online and SkyDrive

Outlook is designed to work seamlessly with Microsoft's free Office Web Apps. So you can open, edit, and share Office files right from the inbox. This is great if you or the recipient is using a computer without Office installed. Integration with SkyDrive makes sharing and saving your files simple in 7 GB of free storage space. To share files place them in SkyDrive and email a link. Recipients can see photos and documents, even if they don't have Office on their computer.



Get creative with Text Boxes

by Nancy DeMarte

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When you use Microsoft Office, you create and edit text all the time. Word, of course, is dominated by text; Excel and PowerPoint both use text in many of their functions. All recent versions of Office also include a tool called a "text box" for special uses of text. Let's find out what it is and how to use it.

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A text box is a specialized shape in which you can enter text. It functions outside the regular margin constraints of a document and can be moved or resized as needed. A text box is useful for adding a caption to a photo or annotating a diagram or chart. If you want to emphasize an important statement in a document, you can use a text box to repeat the statement in a “pull quote” and locate it in an unexpected spot, such as along a margin (known as a Sidebar) or across columns in the document. Its flexibility makes a text box useful in many situations.

Text boxes have most of the same properties as shapes. In Word 2007 and 2010, when you click the Insert tab, then Text Box, you open the Text Box gallery of 36 preformatted text boxes, as well as the “Draw text box” option. If one of the preset boxes meets your needs, click to insert it into the document. Older versions of Word lack this gallery, but you can still draw a text box, which is most often my choice. Click “Draw text box” at the bottom of the gallery. Then click anywhere in your document where you want the text box to appear and drag diagonally down the page to the right to create the text box. At first the box covers a portion of the normal text. This is because the default text wrapping setting is “in front of text.” If you don’t want the text box to hide the document text, select the text box so “handles” appear around the box. At this point, the Text Box Tools Format tab appears on the ribbon. Click Format, and then Text Wrapping in the Arrange group. Change the setting to Tight, which will position the text box within the existing text and also allow you to move the text box. Do this by clicking an edge so a crossed arrows icon appears and dragging it to a new location. You can also resize the box by dragging an edge or corner. To enter text in the box, replace the informational text with your own.

Once a text box is created and located in the document, it can be formatted in many ways. To format the text, select it, and a small version of the Font group on the Home tab will appear. Use these tools to change the font style, size, color, and other attributes. (You can also click the

Home tab and use the full set of options in the Font group.) To format the text box itself, select it and use the tools on the Text Box Tools Format tab. For example, you can fill the box with a color, remove or change the border styles, make the text read vertically, or add special 3-D effects.

In Office 2007 and 2010, text boxes are not limited to a rectangular shape. You can add text to any of the items in the shapes gallery. Click Insert – Shapes and click a shape. Click in your document and draw the shape in the same way you drew the text box. Change the text wrapping to Tight as you did above, then right click inside the shape and choose “Add Text.” The large number of shape choices gives you many options for text boxes. Another approach is to begin with a classic text box, even after it is filled with text. Select it, which opens the Text Box Tools Format tab. Click Format and select “Change shape,” which opens the shapes gallery. Click a new shape, and the text box transforms into that shape with all its contents intact. Another interesting possibility is inserting a photo or piece of clip art into a text box. With the text box or shape selected, click the Insert tab – Picture. Click the photo you want, then Insert. The photo appears in the text box, resized to fit. The same steps work to insert clip art, charts or tables within text boxes.

Text boxes can be rotated for a dramatic effect. In Office 2010, select the text box, and click and drag the little green rotator circle above the box to rotate it left or right. In Word 2007, for an unknown reason, classic text boxes cannot be rotated, even though shapes can. One way to work around this problem is to create a text box, cut it using the Cut command on the Home tab, and then paste it as a “Picture (Windows Metafile)” using the Paste Special command option under the Paste icon.

Occasionally, you might create a text box in Word that you’d like to reuse at a later time. You can save it by selecting the text inside the box and then clicking Insert and the arrow under the Text Box icon. Choose “Save Selection to Text Box Gallery.”

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Besides Word, text boxes appear in Excel and PowerPoint 2007/10. Neither program contains a text box gallery, but each has the “Draw a Text Box” tool, which gives you all the functions that Word does, including rotation. You can also start with a shape and include text by right clicking and using the “Edit Text” command.

Have a little fun. Create a few text boxes in your next document, spreadsheet or presentation.



Warning: 81 Apps Accessed My Personal Info Online

by Greg West

APCUG Advisor for Regions 6 and International User Groups; Vice President, Sarnia Computer User Group, Canada
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When I scanned Google for invasive Apps I found six Apps that were non-Google apps that had access to my personal information. Who is accessing your personal info?

Scary...It should be.

Wired magazine agrees. “You may trust Google to keep your mail safe,” but would you trust an interesting startup app by unknown college kids? Wired asks you to also consider what a disgruntled employee can do or even “an engineer working in his 20 percent time [at Google maybe]” Here is a must read detailing this topic: <http://bit.ly/wired-security>

Not scared yet?

Do you use Facebook? Is it secured? Of course, you went into Facebook’s security settings and set them all. Even if you did, are you sure someone is not peeking into your personal life, still? You bet they are.

I scanned my computer and found 81 “intrusive Apps” in Facebook alone and they could access my personal information in various degrees. Here is what I found intrusive Apps could do with my Facebook data:

66 apps can use my name somewhere
81 apps have access to my personal info
5 apps know my home location
2 apps are able to access my contacts
51 apps can access my 24/7 Facebook app
52 apps have access to my media and files

The Naked Security blog, by Sophos, one of the leading security and antivirus companies, says, “Of course, there are many legitimate apps and websites which you can give permission to connect with your account - but that doesn't mean you have to have a free-for-all [in downloading them].” Sophos goes on to say that apps that you give permissions to are potentially not safe anymore, “And, in the case of Facebook, it could put your friends' information at risk, as well.” One reason is the free-for-all way many simply give their info to anyone out there. Here is another must read: <http://bit.ly/nakedsecurity>

“OK, so what can we do?” The big tech guns such as Mashable, Tim O’Reilly, Techzilla, MNSBC and many more, recommend this free and amazing software app “MyPermissions.” This program scans your computer (and no, they don’t have any accesses) for all invasive apps on your computer and/or mobile devices. After the scan you are given the complete list of apps that are a possible threat and gives the number of how many can access what information.

Now you can click on the icons of the apps listed and go through and remove apps you do not trust. In my case I simply clicked the “Nuke All Intrusive Apps” button and after several minutes all apps were removed. Of course you don’t have to go to this extreme if you want to go through each app and alter settings. I will add them back on a need-to-have basis.

Wired magazine listed ways for you to “Stay Safe”:

- Clean up your app permissions, especially ones you no longer use.
- Think before you authorize an app. Put on your detective hat and research the app.
- Whenever in doubt, change your password in the given program.

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To get the “MyPermissions” software go to: <http://mypermissions.org>. You can find video tutorials at <http://alternatcloud.com>.

APP OF THE MONTH - zoom.us

<http://zoom.us> This is an easy way to set up an online conference call with up to 15 people. It is fast and free and the best part is the clarity of screenshots and video. The screen resolution, by far, beats Skype. Screen sharing is easy to use and is great for showing family members photos or videos and giving your business people a PowerPoint presentation without leaving your home. I have been helping Rayjon Sarnia (<http://www.rayjon.sarnia.com/>) who is planning on using this for some of their presentations to organize their missions to Haiti. To see how Zoom.us works, watch this video from the Wall Street Journal: <http://on.wsj.com/RQuI8J>



The Gadget Corner

by Steve Baer

Hilton Head Island Computer Club, NC
December 2012 issue, Island Computing
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Searching for a Good – Cheap Bluetooth Keyboard

I have been playing with my new Asus Transformer Infinity TF700 Android (Jelly Bean 4.1.1) Tablet for a few weeks now and love it. I have also been comparing it to my borrowed iPad 2, and functionally I see few major differences. But one difference does show up. The iPad 2 has a 3 row on-screen keyboard that you must toggle to get to the number keys.

The TF700 has a 4 row on-screen keyboard with the numbers always present in the main mode. For me, the 4 row keyboard is a big advantage. It makes entering data and phone numbers much easier. But when I write a longer email or memo, I still long for a real keyboard. Hence, I began a search for a reasonably priced, well rated,

lightweight travel keyboard that I might use occasionally.

My first look was the Kensington Bluetooth keyboard and travel folio case for my borrowed iPad 2. That worked well with the iPad 2, and I could also easily mate it to the Asus TF700. That taught me an important lesson; Despite being marketed as an iPad keyboard, it also worked well with an Android device. I cruised a few websites and determined that this was a fairly general phenomenon. But these are in the \$60-\$80 range, and given the excellent on-screen keyboard I already had, that was more than I wanted to spend. Also, since the keyboard would only be used occasionally, I did not want the full time weight or bulk of a keyboard built into the carrying case.

My next step was to ask around and do web searches. It appears that the Logitech 920-003390 Bluetooth keyboard is extremely well rated. I saw one at a club meeting, and it looks well built. People seem to really like it, but for my purposes it is large, and also runs around \$50.

I also looked at rollup keyboards, but their reviews are poor, and I did not like their typing feel. I looked at the Asus mating keyboard for my Transformer tablet, but it is expensive and heavy. I could have used a wired USB keyboard (an old USB PC keyboard worked well in a test), but I ruled that out. There are also 2.4 GHz keyboards that use a separate radio dongle, but my tablet has Bluetooth built in, and I did not want to tie up its USB port with another dongle.

Then, as I usually do when I’m stumped, I devoted the better part of a Sunday afternoon to surfing the web looking for alternatives. After a while I began to notice a keyboard that went by several names at several prices, but appeared to be the same device. I even found a YouTube video showing someone installing and using it. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLYgofpGKHA>)

The reviews I read about it were favorable by a large percentage. Best of all, it was under \$20 and available from Amazon (I usually find that when

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something is on Amazon and has accumulated a few dozen favorable reviews over a period of months, that there is a good chance that it is not a shoddy product). Anyway, at under \$20 delivered, it was worth taking a chance.

The first picture shows the keyboard. As I mentioned, it is sold under various names including Sanoxy and Anker. Mine was advertised as a Sanoxy Bluetooth Keyboard for iPad on Amazon - at a cost of \$13.50. (I have seen it advertised for over \$30 on some sites.) Of course, the box it came in had neither name, but it was the same device. The unit is all plastic, but looks and feels like a much higher priced Apple keyboard. It is advertised to have Apple function keys, but I did not test those, since my plan was to use it for my Android tablet.



The keyboard arrived in about 3 days, and worked with my Android tablet directly out of the box. It runs on 2 AAA cells, which I prefer, since I did not want to have to discipline myself to recharge yet another device. (We shall see how long the batteries last, but at least it is easy to carry or buy spares.) The battery box underneath at the rear provides a wedge to hold the keyboard at a good typing angle.

The unit arrived with no instructions, but I just followed the general Bluetooth mating steps for the Kensington unit, and it worked fine. (Especially after I remembered to un-mate the Android Tablet from the Kensington keyboard first!) The keys are well spaced and have a very nice feel to them, with a silent click and a satisfying displacement. They work about as well as my main home computer keyboard. I would say that typing a several page memo on this would not be a chore at all. However, since the on-screen tablet keyboard is quite good for a few sentences of email, this unit will stay in my suitcase most of the time, only coming out when there is a lot of typing to do.

Some of the function keys (meant for Apple) also work on the Android tablet (e.g. home, media player controls, sleep). Others are still a mystery. As you can see from the YouTube video mentioned above, this keyboard can also mate with a phone.

The picture below (taken away from my cluttered desk) shows the setup I use for heavy typing and spreadsheet work when I travel. It shows the relative size of the keyboard and 10.1" tablet, as well as the tablet case set up in a vertical position.



Most of the time I use the tablet in a "Couch-Pad" mode in the TV room or an airport waiting room to do simple emails, web searches, and reading the newspaper. In that case, the on-screen keyboard is fine. But at only \$13.50, it is nice to have a second option as well.

This now rounds out my high powered - low cost travel computing system including:

- Asus Infinity TF700 32 GB 10.1" Android (Jelly Bean 4.1.1) Tablet (Currently \$428 on Amazon)
- Included Power Adapter for Above
- Poetic Slimbook Leather Case for Above (\$12.95)
- Generic Stylus (\$1.00)
- ASUS USB Adapter for Tablet (\$13.95)
- Bluetooth Keyboard for Tablet (per this article) (\$13.50)
- Misc. Cheap Generic Micro SD cards and USB sticks to plug into Tablet.

Jabra Supreme UC

by George Harding

Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society, AZ

December 2012 issue, eJournal

www.aztcs.org

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Communications methodologies today are many. This product is a Bluetooth-enabled headset that fits comfortably on your ear. It has the advantage that it is a hands-free device for phone calls.

The headset market has matured considerably since their beginnings. They are smaller, more efficient and more comfortable. Something to consider, as well, is that this device looks attractive, in contrast to some that look like a beetle in your ear!

Setup is remarkably easy. The first step is to charge it. The internal battery takes about 2 hours to fully charge, but it can be done either from your computer or from a wall socket. The kit comes with a USB cable and one with a wall socket connector.

Once charged, the next step is to pair it with a phone. You simply use the settings menu in your phone to turn Bluetooth on, then search for the Jabra device. Once the Jabra is found, it will automatically pair with the phone.

The kit comes with a new type of connector, which the company calls Jabra Link 360. It fits into a USB slot on your computer or laptop and can be used to connect with the headset for Internet calls.

There are other important features of the Supreme. It includes active noise cancellation technology, which allows you to hear your conversation even when surrounding noises would otherwise interrupt.

It also includes audio enhancement technology, which gives you incredible sound quality for both you and the person to whom you are talking.

There are three controls on the Supreme. One is the flip-boom arm. It swings up or down, turning the Supreme off or on. No buttons to push!

About: Jabra Supreme UC

Vendor: Jabra

www.jabra.com

Price: about \$149.99

Micro Center® In Store Clinics

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Micro Center Clinics are held on most weekends, except during holidays. The same topic is usually presented on both Saturday and Sunday. Topics may change and clinics may be cancelled without notice. Please verify the schedule with the store before leaving and register online for e-mail updates (http://www.microcenter.com/instore_clinic/sign_up.html).

Signing up in advance reserves a seat, recommended as space is limited. This can only be done at a store, either at the Tech Support or Customer Support area.

April – May 2013 Schedule

Start Time is 2pm local unless otherwise stated.

Apr 20 & 21: Networking with OS X

Apr 27 & 28: Windows 8 Basics

May 4 & 5: Digital Cameras

May 11 & 12: Photo Tips

Notes from previous clinics are available online at

http://www.microcenter.com/understand_tech/index.html.

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1st Wednesday (5/1), 7 p.m. ET

Technology & PC Help Desk

4th Wednesday (5/22), 7 p.m. ET

Board of Directors

3rd Monday (5/20), 7 p.m. ET

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 (5/18), 12:30 p.m. ET

Online-Only Webinar

<http://www.patacs.org/webinarpat.html>

2nd Wednesday (5/8), 7-9 p.m. ET