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Windows 7 Annoyances

By David A. Karp

Book Review

By Jean Blievernicht

I could write a book about annoyances that I have with computers and software. I have had one or more computers since 1981 and in some ways I'm more annoyed now about some things than I was then. Of course I didn't expect things to be easy then. I used to look forward to getting new software and a new computer, but now I put both off as long as I can because I can do just about all I want to do with my "old" Windows XP and MS Office 2003. And I'm tired of spending time learning new systems and software.

Mr. Karp mentions the concept of the "Strategy Tax." The concept is that Microsoft has so many strategies that it wants to implement that its products suffer as a result. I've often thought about why MS gives you so many options to get the same result. Of course people like to operate in their own ways, but often this is confusing for beginners. Not to mention that the MS idea of what is best/easiest for people changes with each new operating system which is causing some people to rebel when it comes to buying the latest OS.

Mr. Karp points out that one person's annoyance may be a desired feature for someone else. His goal is to help you solve problems and adjust the computer to work in the way you want. Readers can jump around either by picking the appropriate chapter or using the index.

Windows 7 has several versions. A chart shows what you get in each. Mr. Karp shows you how to get features missing on lower level versions. Hopefully you won't have to use the info

on installing or re-installing Windows 7. Dual booting and virtualization are covered also. If you are coming from Windows XP or Vista, a few pages are devoted to helping you make the switch.

An example of a change you can make is placing the Show Desktop feature in a different place. Not earth-shaking, but it might make you happier. How about a quick and dirty shortcut to a Control Panel window where you frequently go? The solution is here as well as a way to list all the pages, subpages, windows and settings in Control panel in one easy list.

Do you prefer the keyboard over the mouse? There are 8 pages of keyboard shortcuts that will make you happy. I'll be spending some time in that section. For those of you who like to work with multiple displays, you'll find a lot of suggestions on managing more than one screen.

Everybody eventually has to work with files and folders. I'll bet you will find a lot more ways to manipulate files than you realized. You'll also learn why the "green screen of death" occurs and what you can do about it and why copying a few short files can sometimes take a lot longer than you expect.

The Registry. I prefer not to deal with it, but if you are so inclined, do read this chapter. You'll learn about the structure of the Registry, how to use the Registry Editor, the types of Values, how to search the Registry, how to prevent changes to it, how to back it up, and LOTS more.

Nowadays people want to use their computer to work with video, audio, or media. It's easier than it used to be, but certainly not easy. You might have problems just playing video back or

the speed at which it's playing. Maybe you want to download a file without immediately playing it. It's possible. (Hint: you'll need a program not in Windows 7.) Which webcam should you buy?

Many people want to manipulate music and photos, pictures, and images. Learn how to get rid of the gaps between songs, how to change music tags, and how to convert audio files from one format to another. Pictures accumulate quickly and you might want to store them on a second drive. Learn how to tell Windows where your Pictures folder ought to be. There are picture sorting hints and even some Media Center hacks.

No one ever has a performance problem or has to troubleshoot. Right? (Quit laughing!) According to Mr. Karp, Windows 7 is not configured for optimal performance out of the box. Microsoft wanted to showcase all the features to help sales. But there is a lot you can do about speeding things up. For instance, a lot of the animation and display effects can be turned off. He gives a brief explanation of each one to help you decide if you want it or not. He talks about shut down, standby, sleep and hibernate. You'll learn that ReadyBoost is more of a help for laptops than for desktops. There are tips to lengthen the time before your battery runs out? This is only a fraction of what is in the Performance chapter.

Ouch! Something is wrong. Now I have to troubleshoot. Not my favorite thing to do at any time. There are questions you should ask to get started. When did the problem start? Is it an isolated problem? And a few more questions before finally asking yourself

"How much is my time worth?" Maybe you should farm out the problem.

But if you decide to try to fix it yourself there's help in dealing with viruses, malware, spyware, and startup problems. What about when a program won't uninstall? Find out about the Green Ribbon of Death and the Blue Screen of Death. The Troubleshooting chapter gives help with driver, hardware, and printer problems as well as preventive maintenance and backup/restore help.

Most everybody has a home network these days—even if it's only 2 computers that communicate with each other and the Internet. Hopefully everything was set up properly. If you are not sure, read the chapter on networking which explains a lot of stuff you may or may not be aware of. There are plenty of warnings in this chapter.

When I buy a new Windows 7 computer, I'm going straight to the second last chapter in the book—Users and Security. User accounts, permissions, security, encryption—it's a complicated mess as far as I'm concerned. Should I just share files and folders, or should I set up a "homegroup?"

A few final words. If you prefer dealing with the command prompt, the final chapter is for you. Besides a good index, there is a BIOS Settings appendix and one listing the TCP/IP ports. If you buy the book, you get free access to the online edition for 45 days.

The "out of the box" choices made by Microsoft may not suit you or if you just want to see what's possible, check out this book. It's easily readable. It's not a book for beginners, but beginners would get something out of it. It's more useful for experienced users and "geeks."

Windows 7 Annoyances

By David A. Karp

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Many of us have encountered frustrations with our computers. Sometimes it appears that running programs crash or otherwise cease functioning without explanation. On older computers, most notoriously those running Windows XP, a cryptic “Blue Screen of Death” (BSOD) sometimes appears when there is a crash of some type, often displaying nonsensical error codes that require extensive research to decode. Some suspicious computer users believe that others are accessing their computer, running unauthorized software or malware. Other wary users may find it interesting seeing what other people may have done on a particular computer, and what programs they may have run, what documents were viewed, and when (what time) the computer was booted and shut down. If a computer was infected by malware, it may often be of great interest to see what was being run on the computer at the time of infestation, and even identify the malware and its payload. This, and more, can be readily displayed by a tiny, free utility, LastActivityView.

LastActivityView is one of dozens of small free utilities published by a feisty software engineer, Nir Sofer, on

his website at <<http://www.nirsoft.net>>. Nir personally writes all of his own software in his spare time, and makes it available to all for free. Many of his utilities are given the highest ratings by a variety of web services and computer publications; all of his software is free of advertising and other pesky irritants, making it popular among his huge and loyal user base. In his spare time, Nir personally maintains his website and updates his software, as well as creates new utilities. One of his newest titles, LastActivityView has caught the attention of computer technicians, forensic experts, hobbyists, and others who really want to know what has really been running on a computer, and when the computer was accessed.

Windows users may be passively aware that their computers save extensive, but often invisible files, about what they have run; LastActivityView has the capability to read these historical files and display additional information about many of the computer’s activities. On my primary computer, this record starts on the day it was manufactured, and documents everything that I have done since I first powered it on after removing it from its box. Every piece of software that I ever installed or uninstalled is listed, including date, time, description, filenames, path on the hard drive, and other information. Every boot, shutdown, crash, and other event was also duly recorded. In addition to simply displaying a huge file with all of my computing activities, LastActivityView also has the power to provide additional information for many of the items listed. LastActivityView also can display detailed information about program interactions, and conflicts that caused software and hardware crashes.

The actual program file itself is tiny, only about 100k in size, and requires no installation. It is totally portable, and can be run from any Windows connected device. The LastActivityView program, an exe file, is one of only three components included in the 64k ZIP (compressed) file downloaded from NirSoft; the other two items in the ZIP file are a small “readme.txt” file with simple instructions and other information, and a standard format Windows Help File (chm format) that can be opened with any version of

According to the included readme.txt file, “LastActivityView is a tool for Windows operating system that collects information from various sources on a running system, and displays a log of actions made by the user and events occurred on this computer. The activity displayed by LastActivityView includes: Running .exe file, Opening open/save dialog-box, Opening file/folder from Explorer or other software, software installation, system shutdown/start, application or system crash, network connection/disconnection and more...”

Actions/Events List

The following actions and events are currently supported by LastActivityView:

- **Run .EXE file:** .EXE file run directly by the user, or by another software/service running in the background.
- **Select file in open/save dialog-box:** The user selected the specified filename from the standard Save/Open dialog-box of Windows.
- **Open file or folder:** The user opened the specified filename from Windows Explorer or from another software.
- **View Folder in Explorer:** The user viewed the specified folder in Windows Explorer.
- **Software Installation:** The specified software has been installed or updated.
- **System Started:** The computer has been started.
- **System Shutdown:** The system has been shut down, directly by the user, or by a software that initiated a reboot.
- **Resumed from sleep:** The computer has been resumed from sleep mode.
- **Network Connected:** Network connected, after previously disconnected.
- **Network Disconnected:** Network has been disconnected.
- **Software Crash:** The specified software has been crashed.
- **Software stopped responding (hang):** The specified software stopped responding.
- **Blue Screen:** Blue screen event has been occurred on the system.
- **User Logon:** The user logged on to the system.
- **User Logoff:** The user logged off from the system. This even might caused by a software that initiated a reboot.
- **Restore Point Created:** Restore point has been created by Windows operating system.
- **Windows Installer Started**
- **Windows Installer Ended**

Windows, and displays detailed help and other information. I downloaded the zip file, and using Windows native utility, “unzipped” or uncompressed it into a new directory that I created for it. Total space required for all three files is a miniscule 130k of drive space. I also copied the files to the USB flash drive that I always have on my car keychain, so I can use it whenever and wherever needed.

The file created by LastActivityView can be quickly exported in a variety of formats that can be utilized by a variety of other programs that can read csv, tab-delimited, xml, or html formatted information. A simple copy and paste can also place information in other programs, such as an Excel spreadsheet. For those who may wish to customize the execution of LastActivityView, several command line options are available,

Command-Line Options

/stext <Filename>	Save the actions and events list into a regular text file.
/stab <Filename>	Save the actions and events list into a tab-delimited text file.
/scomma <Filename>	Save the actions and events list into a comma-delimited text file (csv).
/stabular <Filename>	Save the actions and events list into a tabular text file.
/shtml <Filename>	Save the actions and events list into HTML file (Horizontal).
/sverhtml <Filename>	Save the actions and events list into HTML file (Vertical).
/sxml <Filename>	Save the actions and events list into XML file.

but most users will find that simply running the file without any additional commands will provide comprehensive and useful information.

In addition to the obvious tracking of what was run on a computer, LastActivityView can also provide additional and valuable information. I was able to prove this to myself when I examined some recent logs, looking for software crashes and conflicts. One of several reasons why I do not use Internet Explorer as my primary browser is that for some reason, it sometimes crashes when open. According to the report, my most recent software crash occurred on May 17, at 9:11:07 p.m. when Internet Explorer, version 10.0.9200 crashed. By right-clicking on the line in the log showing the crash, an options menu appeared which displayed what additional information could be shown. I first selected “Properties”, which displayed the Action Time, Description (Software Crash), File Name, Full Path (location on hard drive), and what was most important to me, More Information. Similar information can be displayed as a webpage in HTML by selecting “HTML Report - Selected Item.” The More Information line showed precisely the software conflict that caused the crash; in this

particular case, according to the display, there was a memory conflict between IEXPLORE.EXE 10.0.9200.16576 and TmBpIe32.dll, which is a module or component of my TrendMicro security suite. Now that I have recorded this conflict, it would be easy to determine whether this is a one-time anomaly or a continuing problem that requires attention and remediation. Doing a quick online search for TmBpIe32.dll, I found that this file is a Trend Micro Browser Plug-In for Internet Explorer that is designed to protect the browser from exploitation. According to Wikipedia, “A browser exploit is a form of malicious code that takes advantage of a flaw or vulnerability in an operating system or piece of software with the intent to breach browser security to alter a user’s browser settings without their knowledge. Malicious code may exploit ActiveX, HTML, images, Java, JavaScript, and other Web technologies and cause the browser to run arbitrary code.” I would not have been able to easily and quickly determine the cause of that particular crash without LastActivityView. This is but one of countless purposes that can be accomplished with LastActivityView.

LastActivityView runs on any version of Windows since Windows

2000, and includes XP, Vista, Windows 7 and Windows 8; both 32-bit and 64-bit systems are supported.

For such a tiny, fast, and free program, LastActivityView is a powerful utility that can provide extensive information on what has been done on a Windows computer. For anyone who would like to see for himself what has been running on his computer; what crashed, what caused the crash; files downloaded, installed, or uninstalled; and a wealth of other information, LastActivityView is a very worthwhile program to add to the user's arsenal of utilities.

WEBSITES

<<http://www.nirsoft.net>>.

<http://www.nirsoft.net/utills/computer_activity_view.html>.

<<https://www.techsupportalert.com/content/nifty-way-find-out-what-your-windows-computer-has-been-doing.htm>>.

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Siri Speaks Out! By Sandy Berger

Siri is the virtual assistant that is available in the newer iPhone and iPads. Siri helps you perform tasks, translates your voice into text, and delivers verbal information. Siri works right out of the box with no training. So, recently, when my whole family was gathered together, we decided to get to know Siri on my iPhone a bit better. We all started taking turns asking Siri some questions. We

found some interesting things about Siri and also about the people who programmed her.

Siri, it seems is really a team player. She loves to compliment her owner.

Q. Who is your mother?

A. I have you. That's enough family for me.

Q. Do you love me?

A. Let's just say...you have my utmost admiration.

Q. What is your favorite song?

A. I'm happy listening to your music.

Q. Do I look fat in this?

A. Simply fabulous, Sandy. Is that what you wanted to hear?

NOTE: The "Is that what you wanted to hear?" part was obviously written by a male programmer.

Siri doesn't have just one answer. Many times she is programmed with several answers to the same question. When asked the "Do I look fat question" repeatedly, she came up with several other answers including: "I don't know. But I guess you look pretty good." "Looking good, Sandy! Is that what you wanted to hear?" and "Judging from your voice, I'd say you must be fairly attractive."

Not only does Siri have a sense of humor, but she knows about Abbott and Costello. When asked "Who is on first?" she responded, "Right. That's the man's name."

Although Siri knows about comedy, she is not much of a jokester.

Q. Did you hear the joke about the priest, minister, and rabbi?

A. I don't think I've heard that.

Q. Do you know any jokes?

A. What did one iPhone say to the other iPhone...mmm, I used to know this one.

We tried to get some personal information about Siri.

Q. Do you have a family?

A. Well, I have you.

Q. Where were you born?

A. I, Siri, was designed by Apple in California.

Q. Are you a boy or a girl?

A. I was not assigned a gender.

Q. You are pretty.

A. I don't know why everyone keeps saying that. But thanks.

Q. Siri, you are hilarious.

A. Yes. Sometimes I do feel funny.

Q. Did you get anything for Christmas?

A. I already have everything I need.

Q. How old are you?

A. I'm old enough to be your assistant.

It seems that Siri is not too religious, but she knows about philosophy.

Q. Who is God?

A. Humans have religion. I just have silicon.

Q. What is the meaning of life?

A. It's nothing Nietzsche couldn't teach you.

There are times when Siri just doesn't understand what you mean.

Q. Can you say the Hail Mary?

A. No hail in sight in Mary, Turkmenistan.

Siri's best answer, however, may be this one.

Q. What is the best cell phone?

A. Wait...there are other phones?

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The Golden Rule

He/she who has the gold makes the rules.



IObit Releases New Free and Pro Malware Fighter 2 By Ira Wilsker

I have always been a fan of utilizing third party malware scanners to provide computer security in depth as well as to detect and neutralize any malware that may have penetrated the primary computer security software. Countless times in this column over the years, I have recommended free standing anti-malware software from MalwareBytes, SuperAntiSpyware, and Emsisoft. I have now had an opportunity to experiment with another newly released competing product, and my first impressions are positive. This newly released anti-malware product is Malware Fighter 2 from IObit.

Available from the IObit website <<http://www.iobit.com>> as both a free version and a paid Pro version (the Pro version is currently introductory priced at \$19.95 for a one year license). Both versions offer real-time protection from malware attacks with a security package that is easy on system resources (does not significantly slow down the computer), is frequently updated, can detect and remove malware infections that may have penetrated the existing security software, and is explicitly designed to run on top of other antivirus and security software in order to provide security in depth. Both versions use IObit's proprietary "Dual-Core" anti-malware engine which claims to be able to detect complex and deeply hidden malware, including spyware, adware, Trojans, keyloggers, bots, worms, and hijackers and other malware threats. If a suspicious file or behavior is detected that is not included in the

updated Malware Fighter's database, the questionable file is uploaded to the new "IObit Cloud Security" service for further analysis and resolution. For

are intentionally designed to run concurrently with contemporary security software in order to provide enhanced security in real-time, and Malware



users who prefer simplicity, Malware Fighter offers a "Smart One-Stop Solution" that can detect and repair any malware security issues with a single mouse click. The only major difference between the free and Pro versions that I could find is that the Pro version automatically updates itself (in the free version, the user has to click on the update button), and the Pro version can be set to automatically perform a scan at selected times.

As good as they may be, no security product offers 100% protection. In order to increase the security of a PC, it is often desirable to implement a layered defense which will impose additional barriers and defenses to a variety of cyber threats. While there is an old and mostly still applicable adage "Never run more than one antivirus program at a time," there are exceptions to that rule. Today, several anti-malware products

Fighter is one of those products. This software is written to be compatible with other antivirus and anti-malware software, firewall software, and other security products.

The real-time functions in Malware Fighter provide comprehensive protection from malware threats, including a series of "Guards" that protect the computer and its software from attacks targeted at specific computer functions. These guards include a "Startup Guard" that prevents unwanted programs from installing themselves such that they load every time the computer is booted; a "Browser Guard" that protects the browser from being hijacked, having the startup page changed without consent, and other browser based threats; a "Network Guard" that blocks web pages containing threats; a "File Guard" that protects critical system and program



files as well as scans unknown files for threats; a “Cookie Guard” that protects the browser and the user from dangerous cookies (small text files placed on the computer by websites that can violate your privacy and safety); a “Process Guard” that monitors the running processes on the computer, continuously searching for threats that may start to run; a “USB Disk Guard” that protects from infestation from USB connected devices; and “Malicious Action” that protects against other malicious behaviors, threats and dangers to the computer. These real-time protections are always running and providing continuous protection, even when web gaming, web browsing, reading e-mail, shopping online, watching videos, and performing other PC activities.

Currently, a nasty form of cyber threat is referred to as a “zero day” threat, in that it can be introduced and spread so quickly, that it is nearly impossible for security providers to detect the threat and devise a solution to neutralize it before it spreads widely. IObit Malware

Fighters uses a variety of tools to protect the user from these rapidly evolving threats, including a form of Host Intrusion Prevention System, commonly referred to as “HIPS.” Malware Fighter has a feature it calls “DOG” to detect these new threats. According to IObit, “DOG (Digital Original Gene) is a novel heuristic malware detection algorithm, that evaluates key attributes relating to software making, distribution and advertising. Various factors are considered before determining that a program is malicious. For instance, if the program is published by a notorious vendor. The main function of DOG is to enhance detection of zero day threats.”

In addition to providing real-time protection, this type of software is also designed to scan the computer for existing threats; Malware Fighter offers three levels of scanning speeds, a smart scan, a full scan, and a custom scan. A smart scan is the fastest of the automatic scans (but still may take over an hour to run), but only scans the critical software files and locations on the computer, as

they are the most likely to harbor any infections; most of the time, a smart scan is adequate for routine security scans. A full scan is the slowest, but most comprehensive scan, as it searches everything for malware on all connected hard drives; with large or multiple hard drives, a full scan could take several hours to complete, but it is the most comprehensive and complete scan available. A custom scan only scans selected areas or functions; Malware Fighter allows user selectable custom scans covering critical system areas, processes running in memory (running malware can often be quickly detected here, as a memory processes scan only takes a few seconds), or specific hard drives.

IObit Malware Fighter will run fine on all contemporary versions of Windows, including Window 8, Windows 7, XP, Vista, and Windows 2000. Hardware requirements are minimal for a modern computer, such that Malware Fighter will run on almost any Windows PC with a minimum of 256 megs of RAM, a 300 MHz processor, and 30 MB of hard drive space.

For those who would like another malware scanner in order to confirm their PC's security, or would like a free or paid real-time malware utility that can provide security in depth in addition to the security software already installed, IObit's new Malware Fighter 2 would be very worthy of consideration.

WEBSITES

<<http://www.iobit.com/malware-fighter.php>>.

<<http://www.iobit.com/malware-fighter-pro.php>>.

<<http://www.iobit.com/help/imf/>>.

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HDTV—What to Buy By Sandy Berger

For those of you who are thinking about buying an HDTV this year, here's a quick recap on the specs that you need to know about.

There are three main types of HDTV: Plasma, LCD and LCD with LED backlighting. [Editor's Note: There are two types of LED backlighting: edge lit and full array with local dimming.] Each is different in the technologies they use to light the screen. While plasma used to be the cat's meow, LCD technology has improved more over the last few years and with the addition of LED backlighting, it is now pretty close to an equal contender. Plasmas still have darker blacks and are better in dark rooms. As far as price goes, plasma can give you good bang for your buck if you want a really big screen. However most of us don't want to keep the drapes drawn during the day and many of us are happy with a 42" to 48" screen.

In that size screen, LCD and LED are more cost effective than plasma. An LED TV is simply an LCD with LED (light emitting diode) backlighting. You will pay a slight premium for LED over a plain LCD TV. LEDs offer better energy efficiency and are often thinner. Most, but not all, LEDs have slightly brighter pictures. If poorly done, however, they can have lighting

uniformity issues. So let your eyes be your guide in that respect.

You will still hear about 720p and 1080p in the TV specifications. If you have 20/20 vision and sit 12 feet from the TV, you won't really notice much difference between a 720p and a 1080p TV. You would actually have to sit quite a bit closer to see any additional details. These days, however, 1080p TVs are becoming the norm and not adding much to the cost, so you may want to get a 1080p TV just because you can.

Two other common HDTV specifications are refresh rate and contrast ratios. You will see refresh rates of 60 Hz, all the way up to 480 Hz and you will see a wide variety of contrast ratios. These two specs are often used to entice people to purchase more expensive TVs. In another article, I'll give you a rundown of exactly what these two specs mean, but my simple advice is that in purchasing an HDTV, you can pretty much ignore them both without detriment.

When buying an HDTV, the last thing to consider are the extras like 3D and Internet connectivity. I personally don't like 3D. Not only does it give me a headache, but I don't want to have to wear glasses to watch TV. If, however, you like 3D, go for it. Just remember that because of lack of 3D content, the only way to really take advantage of a 3D TV is to buy a Blu-ray player and 3D movies on disks.

As far as Internet connectivity, it can be a plus if you plan on using Netflix, Amazon videos, or other content from the Web, but don't pay too much of a premium for Internet connectivity because you can always add a device like Roku, Apple TV or others to add it later fairly inexpensively.

[Editor's Note: Another thing to consider is whether the TV has the correct and enough connection ports to connect all the devices you have, or are likely to have, to it. Most of the newer devices connect via HDMI but some older DVD players and other devices may not have HDMI outputs. In any event count up the number of devices you plan to connect such as your DVD or Blu-ray player satellite receiver, Roku, etc. and make sure the TV you are considering has the type and number of input ports you will need.]

Okay Betsy that brings us to your TV cabinet, your choice of manufacturer, and sound. Building a cabinet around the TV is a bit old fashioned and not really necessary with the new TVs. They are so thin and light that you might be better off to simply buy a small stand or hang your new TV on the wall.

Many of you mention to me that Samsung and Sony are the two brands that you feel are highly rated. Yes. They are both good brands but even good brands are not perfect. I have a smaller Samsung that has been going without a glitch for about eight years. The 42" Samsung that I purchased a few years ago, however, has had two repairs that would have each cost more than the TV. Luckily I took out a five year service policy when I purchased the TV. A friend of mine has already had to replace the Sony that he purchased three years ago.

Bottom line is that if you pay more than \$700 for an HDTV, you may want to see if a service policy is cost effective.

As far as brands go, if you want to save some money, I also like Visio, which is a less expensive brand. My Black Friday purchase was a 26"

Insignia LED 1080p 60 Hz TV for \$99. Insignia is a value-brand from Best Buy. I don't expect this TV to be perfect, but for \$100 I won't feel bad if I have to throw it away in three or four years.

Sandy Berger <[sandy \(at\) compukiss.com](mailto:sandy(at)compukiss.com)> runs **Compu-KISS** <<http://www.compukiss.com>>.

The Tip Corner By Bill Sheff

Remove Malware

If you do not do a routine cleaning out of malware from time to time, you can be subject to system crashes, blue screens, computer slowdowns, and even hardware failure. You want to periodically clean out your cookie folder, Internet files and scan your computer. Unlike virus checkers, where you only want one program operating on your system, you can have more than one program to check for malware and spyware. There are various strengths and weaknesses with each one. There are several free ones, and there are others included within the security suites like McAfee, Avast and Norton as well as Microsoft Security Essentials. Some standalone programs are Malwarebytes, AdAware and AVG. I have been using CCleaner for many years which not only checks for malware and Trojans but will also search and clean your registry of orphan shortcuts and other problems. One of the useful items included in CCleaner is the ability to select cookies—such as from your banks or shopping sites—and save them before you do a cookie cleanup, keeping your important ones so you do not have to reenter data on sites you use frequently. Another important feature is making a copy of your registry before

making any changes in case something was inadvertently removed. I have trusted CCleaner to do its job with no adverse results. Better yet, it is free. We have discussed this at the Novice SIG but I thought it worthwhile to include it in my tip column.

Using the Command Prompt to Reveal Hidden Files

Some viruses leave behind nasty side effects, even when your antivirus program has cleaned the actual virus from your computer. If your desktop icons are missing and your C: drive appears blank, don't panic, your files haven't gone permanently AWOL.

Common viruses, such as the Windows 7 Recovery virus, will hide your files in an attempt to coerce you into paying for the virus's removal. When you view your desktop or click on your C: drive, it may appear that all of your files have been deleted, but they haven't. If this happens to you here is how to restore them. Click the Start button in the lower left corner of your taskbar. Type cmd in the search box at the bottom of the menu and press Enter. If you're using Windows XP, click Run and type cmd into the Run box.

Type `attrib -s -h -r c:*.* /s /d` and press Enter to execute the command.

Allow the command to finish executing (it may take a few minutes). When it's done, close the command prompt window and check your desktop—your files, hidden by the virus, have been restored. You can use the same trick to restore files the virus may have hidden on other drives, including removable storage such as flash drives and external hard drives; just change the drive letter (c:) in the command above to the drive letter of the storage device with the hidden files.

Do we have to defrag a USB Flash or thumb drive?

The short answer is NO. Since they are solid state without any moving parts there is no reason to do a defrag. Additionally, you could even damage the device if you defragment it too many times. Each memory cell on a flash memory device only has a certain number of times you can write to it before it becomes damaged.

But don't panic, it will take quite a while for that to happen. With memory prices still falling, think of multiple backup scenarios to protect your data.

I think I gave this one before, but it is a goodie. Re-name multiple files at once

The next time you have a bunch of files, folders, or pictures with names like DSC_5678 and want to rename them in a more uniform way, do this: Highlight all the files/folder in question, then Right-click, choose Rename and call it something that best describes them. For example: XmasParty2012. Now you have the name you want, and it numbers each picture. Note the file that the cursor is on when rename is selected will be the first on the list. So if you want to keep the order put the cursor on the top file.

Here is a new subject: Android OS

More of us are getting or have smart phones. Here is a tip for the Android Operating System. I do not know if it also applies to the iOS, so check it out. You know that each phone or tablet comes with multiple screens you can swipe to. After awhile there are icons and widgets spread across the four to five screens we have (actually, the new Samsung Galaxy S III has seven). Here is a way to make one of those screens your home screen without moving the icons.

First, pinch your screen with two fingers to zoom out. This "zoomed-out" view will show you all of the screens you're able to work with. On my phone I just have to tap the screen I want to be home. With some other phone you will find a little, tiny house icon in the upper right corner of each zoomed out screen. Tap that little house and it will set the specified screen as your new home screen. Going back to your original home screen is easy. Just do it again.

Tablet Shopping: Accessories Worth Buying

If a tablet is now part of your high tech items, be it the Apple iPad or the Amazon Kindle or anything in between, what accessories are worth buying and which should you avoid?

Cases

A case is a good investment. Find a case with a comfortable feel, along with a stand or a holder for other items you already carry. Avoid cases that weigh too much, though, as the combined weight of the tablet and case can get bothersome for your wrist.

Screen Protector/Cleaning Cloth

A screen protector film is very popular because they provide a scratch resistant, plastic-like coating to the screen. I use it on both my phone and tablet. A cleaning cloth or other cleaning device is great to remove fingerprints and smudges on the screen. A good microfiber or pad-based cleaning device works best and will let you wipe the screen clean hundreds of times over.

Stylus

A stylus is very useful. You can buy one that will allow you to take handwritten notes or draw on your screen, and another that will allow you to do a one stylus typing. There are a host of note-taking applications

available and a lot of coloring/drawing applications. Make sure you purchase a stylus that has a good tip and is designed especially for tablets with capacitive touchscreens, as they require special tips to work with them.

There are also App Store Gift Card Applications, that are great add-ons to any tablet. There are a host of retailers who will offer gift cards to the store the tablet works with. For iPads, any iTunes gift card can be used. For Amazon Kindles, any Amazon.com or Kindle Gift Card can be used. For Google Android devices, any Google Play gift card works. During the holidays, some vendors offered discounts on bulk packages of gift cards, and some of them might still be available. Google it.

Extended Warranty

WATCH OUT! This can either be a good deal or a horrible waste of money, so get the specifics on terms, deductible (price you pay to make a claim), replacement rules, and period before agreeing to anything. Make sure you see it in writing, and don't just take the salesman's word for it. There are also third party warranties, such as SquareTrade who offer third-party warranties on most electronics, including tablets, usually at very fair prices. I myself do not go for warranties, since most items come with a one year guarantee.

Bill Sheff <[Nsheff\(at\)aol.com](mailto:Nsheff(at)aol.com)> is Novice SIG Coordinator for the Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA <<https://sites.google.com/site/lvcgsite/>>. This article first appeared in the January 2013 issue of The LVCG Journal.

**To err is human but to really
foul things up requires a
computer.**

Back to Basics PLEASE HELP ME LEARN WINDOWS 8 By Jim Cerny

Recently I have had my first exposure to the new Windows operating system, Windows 8.

I don't like it.

I know things have to progress, things have to improve, change has to happen. But what I fail to understand is why those who make these changes cannot make it easier for me to learn and adapt to them. Designers should realize that the computer itself is a great teaching tool and can easily be programmed to help ALL users gradually move into new systems—but the designers do not seem to care about anyone's learning curve. They push their changes on us with an attitude of “this is the future we have decided for you, learn it or else.” A better way to progress is needed and so is a better attitude from Microsoft.

Windows 8 is a major change to using your computer. At first look you see that nothing seems familiar, so you are alienated right away. What a way to make a poor first impression. The screen with its mysterious boxes may look confusing and may seem like things are hidden in mysterious places, but don't let that fool you—it really IS confusing and things really ARE hidden in mysterious places! I don't see how it could be any more confusing unless you had some monkeys playing with the design. Well, maybe they did. It seems that Microsoft is somehow trying to mix us up by having both a “desktop” and a “touchpad” approach at the same time. But the worst of it all from my view is that things have been moved around for

no reason—mysterious hidden options lurk in the corners of the screen totally out of sight (you will never know they are there unless someone teaches you). If you are like me and find yourself faced with a new computer operating system, the first thing you think of is “How can I do what always used to do?” You know, like using e-mail, creating a document, working with photos, etc. Where do I find this stuff? Where’s the “start” menu? Control panel? Settings? Ha-ha, the jokes on you, they’ve changed everything! They are playing hide-and-seek with us.

Ok, I know no one will listen to me, but here is what I would do if I ran Microsoft. When a new operating system comes out and you install it on your computer, you first see NO changes. Everything looks the same. Wow, what a concept! No shock, no alienation. Then you start using your computer and you can do anything you did the old way. But now, as you use the old system, you are taught the new system as you are using it. Simple messages, one at a time, would appear to tell you and show you how to do what you want in the new system—and gradually, as you work, more and more of the new system merges in and more of the old system merges out. It would be a “learn as you use” concept. And the whole thing could be optional. You could turn it off and just plunge right in if you want (this option would be for those who enjoy bungee-jumping or skydiving), or you would be given the opportunity to learn at a rate that is comfortable to you—quickly or more gradually. As you learn each new concept, you would be given the option to confirm that you understand that concept and “turn off” that particular instruction, gradually eliminating the

old system and the teaching instructions. Of course there will be other things you need to learn too, and for these a nice friendly “tip of the day” would appear to teach you ONE simple thing about the new system, in just a minute or two, each time you use your computer. A “learning center” program would keep track of your progress and help you decide what you need to learn next that would be most helpful based upon how you use your computer. You could use the “learning center” for more concentrated learning time, when you want to learn a particular topic, for help with a particular concept, or something the computer thinks you need to know. And as you use the learning center you would be eliminating the “learning pop-ups” as you use your computer. Eventually a time would come when the computer’s “learning center” and you agree that you are well enough along in your learning curve to be totally converted—and then your computer prints out your diploma! Even the diplomas could be different levels of education, from “Basic Expert” to “Adept Wizard” to “Windows 8 Super Geek.”

If you are like me, you are not a computer “geek” and certainly do not want to become an expert on any operating system. But we all DO need to learn how to do our work in the new system. So why not use the computer itself to help us transition to new systems? To me, that makes perfect logical sense, especially if you wanted to keep your customers—which is probably why Microsoft didn’t do it.

Jim Cerny <[jimcerny123\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:jimcerny123(at)gmail.com)> is a Director of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida <[http:// www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org)>. This article first appeared in the January 2013 issue of the Sarasota PC Monitor.



BOARD MEETING
June 9, 2013
Carol Sanzi

Board Members Present

President Mike Bader, Vice President Richard Jackson, Secretary Carol Sanzi, Treasurer Brian Brodsky, SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow, and Members-at-Large Bob Clyne and Richard Fink. Also attending was member Leo Madejczyk. The board meeting was called to order at 12:15 p.m.

Old Business

Brian Brodsky reported that the current treasury amount equaled a total of \$8,737.63 with \$3,977.14 in the checking account and \$4,760.49 invested in three Certificates of Deposit. The membership is currently 69. It is time for Jeff Daniels and David Shiner to renew their memberships.

Bob Clyne moved to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2013 and May 12, 2013 meetings of the Board of Directors as published in the May and June 2013 issues of the DATA BUS respectively. Mike Bader seconded the motion and it was carried.

Bob Clyne moved to discontinue the service for the SEMCO phone line. Brian Brodsky seconded the motion and it was carried.

Bob Clyne reported that the SEMCO Audit Committee met with the Treasurer of the Organization on June 2, 2013, and reviewed the 2012 fiscal year records. The Committee believes, after completing their review, that the financial statements prepared by the Treasurer and furnished to the Board for the 2012 fiscal year present, in all material respects, a full and fair picture

of the Organization's finances for such fiscal year with the exception that there were errors in the amounts reported to the Board, but those errors did not reflect errors in the corporation's accounts. The Committee believes, after completing their review, that the transactions of the Organization entered into during such fiscal year were proper.

New Business

Brian Brodsky moved for the board to authorize the purchase of a roll of 100 U.S. Postage stamps at \$46. Bob Clyne seconded the motion and it was carried.

Richard Jackson requested the Board consider presenting Warner Mach with a commemorative gift for his 37 years of service. Carol Sanzi will research items and report back to the board.

Richard Jackson led a discussion regarding the difficult task of coming up with ideas for presentations and of getting presenters. He suggested the possibility of shortening the Sunday Meeting to one topic a month.

Richard Jackson brought up the topic of the possibility of disbanding SEMCO or merging SEMCO with another computer club. He feels that without more volunteers, the SEMCO format cannot continue.

Richard Jackson suggested that he re-contact Pamela Tabak of Computer Tutor Inc. She works with user groups in building their memberships.

Bob Clyne moved to adjourn at 1:15 p.m. Tom Callow seconded the motion and it was carried.

**Undetectable errors are
infinite in variety, in contrast
to detectable errors, which
by definition are limited.**

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGS)



SIG-COMPUTING Tom Callow

July 14 1:45 p.m.: Web Page Development using Joomla! and On-line Library Resources: Eric Hayes will demonstrate how to create a web page using Joomla!, a content management system. He will also explain what resources are needed to host a web site using Joomla! In addition Eric will show us some of the on-line library resources that are available through your local library.



SIG-LINUX Brian Brodsky

July 23 (Tues.) 6:45 p.m.: Managing Users: SIG-Linux chairman Brian Brodsky will discuss Linux users and groups and how to manage them through the command line as well as the graphical user interface. **Where:** At the home of Richard Jackson, 10495 Kingston, Huntington Woods, MI 48070. Call Richard at (248) 546-3694 for directions.

SIG-TECHNIQUES Chairman Needed

July 14 3:45 p.m.: Microsoft Is Blue Over Windows 8: SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow will discuss the anticipated changes to Windows 8 in Windows 8.1 (code named Windows Blue) and will demonstrate the public preview of Windows 8.1.



SIG-PROGRAMMING Richard Jackson

July 20 (Sat.) 2:00 p.m.: Visual Basic 2010 Express: Chapter 4 and the associated programing exercises of the book "Microsoft® Visual Basic® 2010 Step by Step." **Where:** At the home of Richard Jackson. Contact Mr. Jackson for full details: (248) 546-3694.



SIG-ADVICE Franz Breidenich

August 8 (Thur.): 5:30 p.m.: General discussion. At the Madison Heights Library located at 240 West 13 Mile Rd. one block West of John R. The parking lot entrance is off Brush St. The lot and entrance to the library are located on the north side of the library.

August DATA BUS DEADLINE (7th day after 2nd Sunday in month)
SEMCO Input and Members' Ads—Deadline: Sun., July 21, 11:59 p.m. Members' personal ads are free. To mail, use Editor [address on Page 2](#); e-mail address: [<clayne@mich.com>](mailto:clayne@mich.com). PLEASE send to arrive sooner than deadline.
Business Ads - Deadline: Second Friday monthly. Contact Editor ([address Page 2](#)).

Bob Clyne

clyne@mich.com

(to post monthly computer group info)

**CALENDAR-OF-EVENTS
OTHER GROUPS**

COMP (Computer Operators of Marysville & Port Huron)

July & August—no meeting, 7 p.m. Acheson Community Resource Center, 514 McMorran, Port Huron, MI Jane Wheatly 810-982-1187 or Pam Raisanen E-mail info: <bwcompinfo@gmail.com>. Web: <<http://www.bwcomp.org>>.

DITUG: Detroit IT User Group (Formerly Focus: Hope IT User Group)

1400 Oakman, Detroit, MI. 48238. Web info <<http://www.ditug.org>>. See web sites for details. Pre-registration required.

HUG (Holly User Group)

July 13, 9 a.m.–noon (2nd Saturday) Groveland Twp. Fire Hall, 3085 Grange Hall Rd. & Dixie Hwy., Holly, MI. 48442. Ron McCauley 810-629-9683. Topic: TBA.

MacGroup-Detroit

July 21, 3:00 p.m., Birmingham Temple, 28611 West 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills. Info: Terry White, <terry@macgroup.org> or 248-569-4933. <<http://www.macgroup.org>>. SIGs: 2:00 PM. Topic: TBA.

MacTechnics, (MAC User Group)

July 20, See web site for topic, meeting time and location. <<http://www.mactechnics.org>>. JoAnn Olson at 248-478-4300. Topic: TBA.

MDLUG (Metro Detroit Linux User Group)

July 13. 12, 12:30 p.m., (2nd Saturday); Michigan Network Services, 1677 W. Hamlin Rd., Rochester Hills, MI 48309. Web: <<http://www.mdlug.org>>. Topic: TBA.

Motor City Free Geek

Every Saturday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. 1511 Jarvis St. Suite #10, Ferndale, MI 48220. <<http://www.motorcityfreegeek.net>>. E-mail: <MotorCityFreeGeek@gmail.com>. Recycling & Open Source.

MUG (Michigan User Group)

July 9, 6:30 p.m., (2nd Tuesday): Farmington Community Library-Main Branch, 32737 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI. 48334. <<http://www.mug.org>>. Topic: TBA.

Oak Park Computer Club

Every Fri., 10:30 a.m. at Panera Bread—in the Cornerstone Mall (on the west side of Greenfield, south of Mt. Vernon) just north of Kroger. Including Q&A.

Royal Oak Computer Club

Every Wed., 12:30 to 2:30 PM at Mahany/Meininger Senior Community Center, 3500 Marais Ave., Royal Oak, 48073. Near Crooks & 13 Mile. Guest speakers & regular monthly speakers. <<http://tinyurl.com/royaloakcc>>.

SHCC (Sterling Heights Computer Club)

September 3, 7:30 p.m. (1st Tues); Macomb Community College South Campus, Bldg. K, 14500 E. 12 Mile Rd. Don VanSyckel <Don@VanSyckel.net>, 586-731-9232; Web: <<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>>. Topic: Backup, Issues and Techniques (tentative).

SEMCO

Serving the needs of professionals, hobbyists, novices, and prospective computer users since 1976.

- * Learn more about computing in an informal, non-academic setting.
- * Get honest answers to computer questions without commercial bias.
- * Meet and interact with other computer users. Personal and electronic networking.
- * Gain access to members willing to provide help in response to a phone call or e-mail.
- * Receive monthly newsletter with informative articles.



JUNE REFRESHMENT DONORS

Coordinator: Richard Jackson

Donors:

Brian Brodsky

Carol Sanzi

Ken Phillips

Terry Williams

Note: For the Key Word to get a 40% discount see Mike Bader.



User Group Members SAVE 40%
learn • master • create

www.focalpress.com

COMPUTER RESOURCE PEOPLE

This is a list of people willing to be resources for other members to call when they have hardware or software questions.

Are you willing to help members learn?

Which software programs are you familiar enough with?

It is not necessary to be an expert, but just have some familiarity with the program and be willing to help someone starting to learn it. Please give this some thought and volunteer at the next group meeting.

Almost Anything: Vander-Schrier

AutoCAD: Comptois

Genealogy: Cook

IBM PC Hardware Issues: Clyne, Yuhasz

Operating Systems: Callow, Clyne, Yuhasz

MAC Hardware and OS Issues: Yuhasz

Security: Bader

MS Office for Windows: Callow

MS Word: Clyne

Networking: Callow

Novell Netware: Yuhasz

Quicken: Clyne

Geocaching: Cook

Relational Database Programming: Lis

Bader, Mike—586-447-6683, 9am–8pm.....	mdbader@flash.net
Callow, Tom—248-642-5770, 9am–5pm.....	tcallow@monaghanpc.com
Clyne, Bob—810-387-3101, 9am–10pm.....	clyne@mich.com
Comptois, Jerry—248-651-2504, anytime	
Cook, Stephen—313-272-7594, eves.....	scook48227@ameritech.net
Lis, Bernie—248-669-0101, 10am–8pm.....	BerLLis@comcast.net
Vander-Schrier, Jack—586-739-7720, 12–8pm.....	jvanders@comcast.net
Yuhasz, Steve.....	Help@yuhasz.org



**SOUTHEASTERN MICHIGAN
COMPUTER ORGANIZATION, INC.**

SEMCO CALENDAR

**Engineering Society of Detroit
20700 Civic Center Dr., Suite 450, 4th Floor
Southfield, MI. 48076**

July 14—SUNDAY (Meet 2nd Sunday)

**SEMCO Board Meeting at 12:00 noon. For Officers and SIG Chairpersons.
Other members are invited to attend.**

SEMCO General Meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SIG-COMPUTING, 1:45 p.m.: Web Page Development using Joomla! and On-line Library Resources: Eric Hayes will demonstrate how to create a web page using Joomla!, a content management system. He will also explain what resources are needed to host a web site using Joomla! In addition Eric will show us some of the on-line library resources that are available through your local library.

SOCIAL PERIOD, 3:15 p.m.: Refreshments! (Reminder: Keep it neat & tidy.)

SIG-TECHNIQUES, 3:45 p.m.: Microsoft Is Blue Over Windows 8: SIG-Computing Chairman Tom Callow will discuss the anticipated changes to Windows 8 in Windows 8.1 (code named Windows Blue) and will demonstrate the public preview of Windows 8.1.

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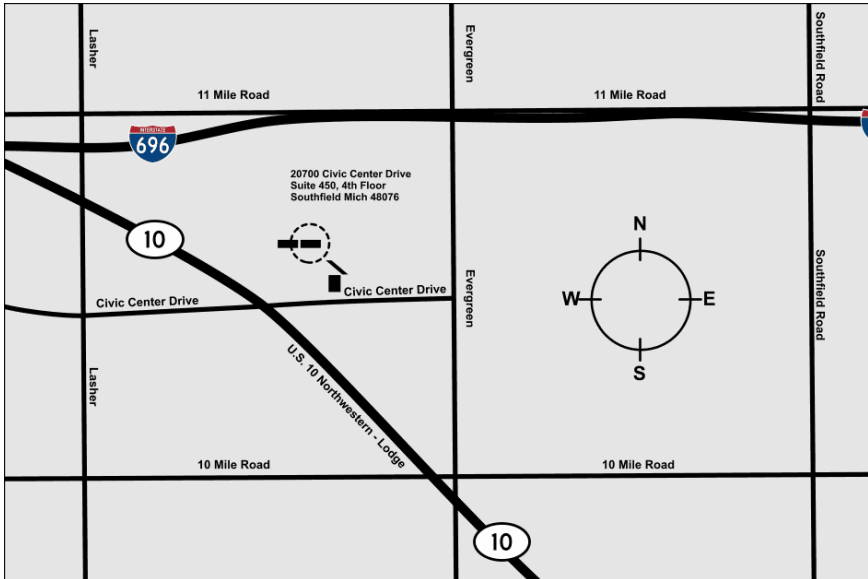
August 11—SEMCO Sunday.

<http://www.semco.org>

PUBLIC INVITED

SEMCO Meetings at Engineering Society of Detroit
20700 Civic Center Drive, Suite 450, 4th Floor
Southfield MI 48076.

42°29'7" N by 83°14'29" W



From I-696 exit at Evergreen. Take Evergreen south to Civic Center Drive. Civic Center Drive is about halfway between I-696/Eleven Mile Rd. and 10 Mile Rd. Turn west, right if you are coming from the north, onto Civic Center Drive. Follow Civic Center Drive, watching the number signs on the right. When you get to the 20700 sign turn right, north, and follow the drive until you arrive at the southwest corner of the brown building with the Engineering Society of Detroit sign near the top. Turn right, east, and go past the front of the building. When you reach the end of the building, turn left, north and go to the back of the building and turn left, west, again. The parking lot will be on your right. The entrance is in the center of the building. Park in back of building. Enter the rear door. The ESD office is on the fourth floor.



**SouthEastern Michigan
Computer Organization, Inc.
P.O. Box 707
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0707**

SEMCO (future meetings)

July 14

August 11

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