

ACPCUG Newsletter

**Akron Main
Public Library**

December 4, 2006

Dec. Program:

Starts at 6:00 PM

Vista Intro by Frank Ramsey + Q&A

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December 2006

Akron-Canton PC Users Group

From The DealsGuy For January 2007 by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

My wife and I decided to treat ourselves to another cruise and this time we were not disappointed. We chose Holland America's MS Volendam for a ten day southern Caribbean cruise and, unlike our experience on HA's Zaandam, we were happy with the way the Volendam did things. Actually, we chose it mostly for the price, but also because it was Holland America since Carnival had some slightly lower prices for that date. Our only complaint might have been poor table service at our dinner seating, although they improved toward the end of the cruise. While we've had better food on cruise ships, the food on the Volendam was not bad.

I liked the ice cream bar that was open at certain times each day offering four different flavors of hard ice cream, one sherbet and one soft ice cream daily with all the trimmings, and plenty of other deserts. All over the ship were stands holding sterilization cream for your hands. Most of them were used voluntarily, but when you entered the dining room, an attendant squirted it into your hand as you entered. I

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was impressed with their efforts to prevent sickness, and I washed my hands quite frequently.

The entertainment was top notch each evening, always something to look forward to. There was only one evening without entertainment, but that was the big barbecue party by the pool, complete with the ice sculpturing, and the food was great. Even our cabin was a nice size and had a king sized bed, a nice sofa and chair. That ship had the largest library I have seen, although it was not a really large ship. The captain said the Volendam had been refurbished nine months ago.

I signed up for time at the Internet Café, but working with their machines was a challenge considering the mouse usually didn't work well and the small curser was hard to follow on any computer I tried. They occasionally had discounts on the service. I bought 100 minutes for \$55. I asked if the Internet service would be a freebie when I took enough cruises, using Princess lines as a comparison. I was told no, and that the free Internet service would soon be ending on Princess Lines since this ISP was taking over as their service provider. Some folks found free Internet service at a couple of ports, but I only found out about it on the ship that night.

Something of interest was that Sprint (our Cell phone provider) had told us we would be able to use our cell phone in the Bahamas and the US Virgin Islands if we set it to roam, but we were surprised when our phones found the Sprint Network when we turned them on in St. Thomas (a US Virgin Island). We didn't have to worry about any roaming charges and had a full signal. A friend had asked us to bring him back some duty-free liquor. Since we knew nothing about prices for it, we were able to call our friend while inside the store in St. Thomas to confirm the best prices. Carrying the heavy bottles around while shopping was another story though.

***Deal Reminder**

The Medistick deal should still be good this month so don't wait any longer. Click on <<http://www.medistick.ch/en/contact/>> and mention the DealsGuy column in the 'comments' area.

Dave Whittle's discount on the Lenova Laptops may still be good. Simply call Lenovo's user group inside sales rep, Isaac Williams, directly for help in configuring your system, or to get answers to your questions. Call 1-877-338-4465, Option 1, Extension 6322.

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I read an interesting article in Information Week magazine about a sophisticated attack on E-Trade and TD Ameritrade that resulted from identity theft. You might find it interesting. <<http://www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=QHSZ4AFSOS4R4QSNLPCXHSCJUNN2JVN?articleID=193402954&queryText=Larry+Greenemeier>>

I haven't tried the items below and descriptions are in their own words, so do your homework if anything interests you.

***Another Tool For Restoring Your MS Office Files**

Smart PC Solutions Inc. announces the release of Smart Data Recovery, the newest freeware utility to restore MS Office documents, photos, music and many other types of files. You just type a path, and Smart Data Recovery will search for deleted files and folders automatically. Once Smart Data Recovery finds erased files, it shows their name, date, time and attributes.

Smart Data Recovery works with different data storage devices, such as hard disk drives (IDE, ATA, SATA and SCSI), flash cards, multimedia cards, USB drives, PC cards, memory sticks, secure digital cards and floppy disks. It handles zip files and files on your digital camera. It also restores all files and folders on a disk drive that, according to the Windows notifications, can't be accessed. The utility supports FAT, FAT16, FAT32 and NTFS, and is compatible with Microsoft Windows NT/2000/XP/2003. The program can also remove the data related to deleted files by just clicking the "Wipe" button. Therefore, nobody will be able to recover your personal information and use it in their own interests. The program has a multilingual interface that supports English, German, Spanish, French and Italian.

Smart Data Recovery is free at <http://www.smartpctools.com/data_recovery>, but here is a special offer! Smart PC Solutions, Inc. offers user group members a 50% discount on their other software products. It says FACUG there, but all UG members can order. Check out the other utilities by Smart PC Solutions, Inc. at the company's web site.

<<http://www.smartpctools.com/products>>

<<http://www.smartpctools.com>>

50% discount URL: <<http://www.smartpctools.com/FACUG.html>>

Mailing Address: Smart PC Solutions, Inc., 901 N. Pitt Str., Suite 325, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA

***Help For Your PIM**

Copy2calendar minimizes the time and effort to create a calendar entry in a personal information manager such as Microsoft Outlook, Lotus Notes or

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Palm Desktop. When you receive an email with the date and time of an upcoming event, you just highlight the text, press Ctrl+C twice, and that's it! A new calendar entry is created. Copy2calendar recognizes all the myriad of formats of date and time that a human reader understands. It accommodates European (day/month/year) and American (month/day/year) conventions. Copy2calendar is able to find date and time specifications in 13 languages including English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch and Swedish.

You can easily extract date and time from a wide variety of sources: mail software, web browser, office applications, and with Copy2calendar, you will never forget or confuse time of an event. Copy2calendar runs under Windows 2000/Windows XP. It is free for noncommercial use, but Registration on LoquiSoft is required. Licenses for commercial use are available at \$24.95 (USD). A fully functional 30-day free evaluation version of Copy2calendar is available from <http://LoquiSoft.com/copy2calendar_setup.exe> (1.6Mb)

Product page link: <<http://loquisoft.com/copy2calendar/>>

E-mail: <werner.noska@loquisoft.com>

Company website: <<http://loquisoft.com/index.php?lang=en&page=&sec>>

***How About A FREE Plugin For PhotoShop!**

SibCode has released the newest version of Icon Plugin for Photoshop. This plug-in enhances Adobe Photoshop with an ability to export and import Windows icons (.ico). The use of the plug-in eliminates the need for intermediate files and additional icon editors. In addition to Adobe Photoshop, the plug-in can work with Elements (? Maybe Photoshop Elements), AfterEffects, Premiere, PhotoDeluxe, Corel PhotoPaint, PaintShop Pro, Painter.

Icon Plugin for Photoshop supports multi-format icons, transparency and semi-transparency, and allows making icons that are compatible with Microsoft Windows XP and Vista. The plug-in also supports non-standard icons of different sizes and color resolutions, including monochrome, 16 colors, 256 colors, 24-bit True Color, and 32-bit True Color with semi-transparency.

Icon Plugin for Photoshop is compatible with all versions of Microsoft Win-

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dows and all versions of Adobe Photoshop, including 3.0-7.0, CS, and CS2. The product is absolutely free.

Product page link: <<http://sibcode.com/icon-plugin/index.htm>>

Screenshot: <<http://sibcode.com/icon-plugin/scrf.png>>

Download link: <<http://www.sibcode.com/downloads/icon-plugin.zip>>

E-mail: <pr@sibcode.com>

Web: <<http://www.sibcode.com>>

That's it for this month. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click <bobclick@mindspring.com>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.

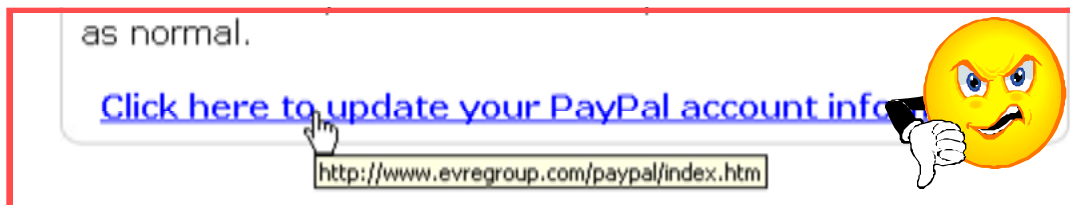
Fooled You ! — I Really Hope Not

By Chuck Davis, Newsletter editor & webmaster,
Sun City Anthem Computer Club, Henderson, NV
Chas (at) anthemwebs.com
www.myscacc.org

I am presenting the following illustrations to show that what you see isn't what you get! The first two purport to be a secure links (https://) to paypal.com. However, when you hover your pointer over the links, you will see the true link. If you have made recent changes to your account, you can safely open your browser and type in the PayPal URL which is <http://www.paypal.com>. The others eliminate the pretense by presenting a text link which is not the true link either.



Another bumper contains 12 links—all to the same different URL. What you see is free.music.mp3, what you get is as you see in the illustration. What you see is not what you get!



These spammers know of the popularity of PayPal and its parent eBay! They are here playing on the possibility of a dispute over payment regarding a transaction.



These links may cause you to loose all of the money in your bank account quickly.

To Dual-Core or not to Dual-Core?

By Jim Sanders, Editor, North Orange County Computer Club, California
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If you have been in that should I or shouldn't I mode for a while, now is a pretty good time to make the plunge. The prices of dual-core processors has come way down in the last year, at the same time the performance has moved several rungs up the ladder. In May, AMD introduced several new high-end Athlon processors. In July, Intel unveiled it's long anticipated Core 2 Duo (AKA code name Conroe) chips. These are Intel's long awaited response to being out-gunned by AMD. They have the new Core micro-architecture that reportedly out-performs similar models of AMD chips

The introduction Core 2 Duo chips by Intel started a price war between AMD and Intel. One sage speculated that this was a strategic move by AMD to make it difficult for Intel to dump a huge inventory of older technology chips without taking a loss on them and lower the profit margin on the new chips. What ever the case, the end users win. The latest and greatest chips from both vendors are a lot less expensive than they were just a short while ago and the older chips are available at bargain basement prices.

The technology that is in the new chips from both AMD and Intel has been significantly improved in the last two years. Intel has upgraded it's NetBurst architecture with the Core and Core 2 Duo technology. AMD has introduced the new AM2 processor socket which, compared to the older 939/940 socket, effectively doubles the processor-to-memory bandwidth with it's support of DDR2 RAM.

There are a lot of individual engineering pieces or basic building blocks that make up all X86 processors. For years Intel rode the marketing bandwagon that basically touted the "My processor clock is faster than yours, so I am better than you are" concept and that was, more often than not, true. AMD tried to compensate for the fact that their high speed chip technology lagged behind Intel by building more efficient CPUs. There are lots of ways to do that, and doing more things in parallel (at the same time) is one of the ways to build a more efficient CPU. So if the CPU is doing twice as many things at the same time, the processor clock can be half the speed. To pick a number, lets say the AMD chip actually has a clock of 500MHz but it is marketed as a 1000+ and the fine print explains that it "Performs as well as other CPUs that really do have a 1000MHz clock." A number of people feel that back a few years, AMD was overly optimistic with their "Performs as

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well as" ratings. The concept however remains true. Over the years, AMD improved the efficiency of their CPUs as well as the clock speeds and the "Performs as well as" ratings more closely matched reality. Once Intel started making chips in the over 3000MHz clock range, they started tripping over the difficulty of making chips run that fast at all, complicated by the huge amount of heat it created. Acknowledging the writing on the wall, Intel decided they had to start making more efficient chips as well.

The irony of Intel running into the wall that those irrefutable facts of Physics represent is that Intel had to borrow a page from the AMD marketing manual. They had to convince their followers that these new Intel CPUs with the slow clock speeds were getting just as much or more work done as the older chips with the impressive clock speeds. Both companies had to deal with the problems created by CPUs that generated as much heat as a 100 watt light bulb. Along with other problems, the size of the heatsink/fan assembly was getting obscene. The demand for ever increasing compute horsepower, however, was relentless. In addition to improving the efficiencies of their processor cores, both companies decided the next logical step was to build two complete CPUs inside one chip and really approach doing twice as many things in the same amount of time. Because Intel still leads AMD in the ability to build chips with tinier features (65nano meter vs. 90nano meter), they can afford to put twice as much cache in their chips and run a higher clock speed and still have a good power consumption rating. By moving the memory controller inside the CPU, AMD has a better multi-core memory scheme. And the technical details, and the debates about them, go on and on.

I am going to try and give you enough of an over-all picture of who is offering what in today's processor world that you can at least determine if you want to try and play in the major leagues or the minor leagues. That is really a daunting task and I hope I come somewhere close to success. One master list of currently offered X86 chips (all of those chips that trace their ancestry back to the original Intel 8086) had nearly 400 different models listed. Most of those are no longer made and ranged in price from \$7.00 for a 600MHz Celeron to \$954 for a Pentium Core 2 Extreme 3.2GHz and from \$17.00 for a 700MHz Athlon Slot-A to \$769.00 for a dual core Athlon FX-62 socket AM2, 2.8GHz processor.

There are a lot of very fast single core CPUs available at very good prices. If you are not an enthusiast user (mostly that means gamer) or heavy into video editing, you may not need one of the dual core units. Some of the single core units are the best values (read cheapest) available and any of

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them that are rated as being in the 3.0GHz or more category should even run the Vista operating system when it is released. Visit the MS Vista hardware requirement site at <http://www.microsoft.com/technet/windowsvista/evaluate/hardware/vistarp.msp> and get the official, albeit optimistic, definition of the minimum hardware you will need to run Vista. Based on my experience with the September RC1 release of Vista running on an AMD 2800+ with 1Gig of RAM, I would not be happy with a slower machine.

If you are an enthusiastic gamer or hard core videophile, and live next door to Bob Jones, plan on spending close to a thousand dollars for your CPU. Not to mention the dual \$500 video cards and 4Gig of RAM. The first of the three categories of processors that we are going to list is the one that you enthusiasts are interested in.

Those categories are; the Enthusiast Dual Core Processors, Main Stream Dual Cores, and Single Core Processors. There is some overlap in both the performance and price of the high end single core and the low end of the dual core processors. One thing to keep in mind, all of the Dual Core chips are 64 Bit processors and most of the single core processors are not 64 Bit.

Enthusiast Dual Core Processors

For the AMD processors you have: Athlon 64 FX-62, Athlon X2 5000+.
For the Intel processors you have: Core 2 Extreme X6800, Core 2 Duo E6700, E6600.

Because Intel and AMD are constantly jostling each other to claim title to King of the Hill, it changes hands. For many months, through June of 2006, it was AMD. Then, in July 2006, Intel reclaimed the title. For almost anyone except the well heeled enthusiast with a social need to be on the Bleeding Edge, any of these processors would make a great system. As has been the case for years, the price curve for the last three to four speed ranges is geometric in nature. The 2.4GHz E6600 is about 40% of the price of X6800 and provides about 60% of the performance. The same is true for the AMD pricing.

Main Stream Dual Cores

For AMD – Athlon 64 X2 AM2 4600, 4200, 4000, 3800, Athlon 64 X2 S939 4800, 4600, 4400, 4200, 3800
For Intel – Core 2 Duo E6400, Pentium Extreme Edition 965 & 955, Pentium D 960, 950, 945, 930, 915, 840, 830, 820, 805
On the AMD line you can easily see just one of the many things that can be confusing about the different designations for AMD's dual core processors. There is an Athlon 64 X2 AM2 4600 and an Athlon 64 X2 S939 4600. The

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only visible difference is that one says AM2 and the other says S939. As explained above, the AM2 designation is for the new DDR2 RAM CPUs. AMD uses two different speeds of DDR2 RAM. The DDR2-800 is used with the Enthusiast CPUs and the DDR2-667 is used with the Main Stream CPUs. Faster memory will, in general, improve through-put and is most noticeable on memory intensive applications. Another consideration when trying to decide between the new AM2 socket and the older S939, is the supply and cost of memory. Production of DDR RAM is being reduced while production of DDR2 RAM is being RAMped up. That means that the price of DDR is going up and the price of DDR2 is going down. You may have noticed the price of the older PC100/133 RAM is almost double the price of PC2700 DDR RAM and I have seen a price for a 1GB DDR2 that was less than the price for the PC3200 1 GB DDR Ram.

Strangely, at the price top of the Intel Main Stream Dual Core line category are the older technology Dual Core models:

D 965 DC Extreme Edition (3.73GHz/775pin PLGA /1066FSB /2X2MB L2 Cache Dual Core) \$1075

D 955 DC Extreme Edition (3.46GHz/775pin PLGA /1066FSB /2X2MB L2 Cache Dual Core) \$995

D 960 DC Standard Edition (3.6GHz/775pin PLGA /800FSB /2X2MB L2 Cache Dual Core) \$349.

The E6400 Core 2 Duo Processor (2.13GHz/775pin LGA 1066FSB 2X1MB L2 Cache) at \$245 is the better buy. This is a good example of the seemingly weird pricing that occurs with bleeding edge CPUs. The D955 is \$646 more than the D960 which has a faster clock but a slower FSB (Front Side Bus). Even stranger is that the price for the older technology D 955 is more than the fastest Core 2 Duo chip. The oldest technology dual core chips from Intel are the D800 series.

Single Core Processors

After looking at the long list of single core processors that are clocked at 3GHz or greater, I changed my mind about listing them. Instead, I will just repeat the advice about computing needs and price. If you are not into gaming or a videophile, they can make a fine system. I am still using an Intel 3.1GHz P4 with 512Meg of expensive Rambus RAM to produce the Orange Bytes and it works fine most of the time.

The future of computing is going to be 64 Bits for a long time even though it is just now starting to gain traction. Since that is true, if you are going to upgrade at all, going with a dual core 64 Bit CPU is the only thing that make sense if you take a long term perspective. Same thing is true for DDR2 RAM, PCI-Express video, and SATA2 hard disks. So the sweet spot

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today is a system based on a Athlon 64 X2 AM2 4200, or an Intel Core 2 Duo E6400 and a good 256Meg PCI Express video card, everything else, your choice.

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Free Up Megabytes of Disk Space

By **Vinny La Bash**, a member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida

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<http://www.spcug.org>

Pull Quote – these folders could be the culprits that are chewing up valuable storage area.

Look in your Windows folder and count how many folders you have that start with "\$NtUninstall". They are all related to various patches, updates and service packs for XP. Those \$NtUninstall folders are created when you install a Microsoft Service Pack, a hot fix, or certain security updates. Some of these folders could date back almost to the day you first installed your computer.

Their names are in blue, and they are all marked as hidden and read only. If you don't see them in the Windows folder, open the Tools menu, and select Folder Options from the drop down menu. After the Folder Options dialog box appears, activate the View tab, then left-click the Show hidden files and folders radio button. Click OK to close the dialog box and the hidden folders should appear. If nothing happens close down Windows Explorer and restart it. You don't need to restart your computer; simply open Windows Explorer again.

Why should you do this? If you're getting low on disk space and the usual remedies haven't freed up enough space, these folders could be the culprits that are chewing up valuable storage area. If you have had Windows installed for more than a year and you are conscientious about keeping your system up-to-date, these useless folders are probably tying up gigabytes of data. Enough of them can have the unfortunate side effect of noticeably slowing down virus and spyware scans. It also takes longer to defrag your disk drive. An accumulation of unnecessary or extraneous data on your system will eventually affect system performance and in extreme cases cause drive errors.

The files within the \$NtUninstall folder provide instructions on how your computer uninstalls a Windows update. Each folder has a specific name ending in the name of a particular Windows modification. If you were to go to add/remove programs and select a Windows update to uninstall, the information on how to run this process would come from the corresponding \$Ntuninstall folder.

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You can safely delete all these folders if you have no plans to uninstall any of the related patches. As updates and patches accumulate, these types of folders will continue to grow and take more disk space.

One solution is to delete only those folders older than three months. Chances are, if you haven't uninstalled a Windows update after three months, you won't ever do it.

Alternatively, once you've made a backup or disk image of any "\$NTUninstall" files, you can delete the files from the hard drive immediately, because you can always restore them from backups, if you need them.

One thing Microsoft should have done is tuck these folders away in a subfolder someplace so you don't have to scroll through them every time you want to locate something in the Windows folder. I've seen machines with over one hundred of these folders. Then again, you could always mark them as hidden.

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Getting Ready for Windows Vista

By Gene Barlow, gene@ugr.com

User Group Relations, <http://www.ugr.com>

Copyrighted October 2006

The next few months promise to be an exciting time for PC users as Microsoft rolls out their new Windows Vista operating system. While some business systems may be released late this year, most of the action will take place shortly after the beginning of the new year. Now is the time to start planning how you are going to take advantage of this new technology.

This is the first new version of Windows in over five years and is a major change in how PC users will interact with their computers. Lots of new functions have been added to Vista to make it the most exciting new Windows since Windows 95 was first introduced. You will want to be a part of this major step forward in technology.

Some of the new features added to Windows Vista include:

- A complete redesign of the graphical user interface that you see and interact with. Windows Vista has a fresh new look and is a lot easier to use.
- Finding things on your Vista computer is going to be much easier. Files can be stored in one location, but retrieved in many different ways.
- New multimedia tools will now be part of Vista. This will help you to better work with your images, music, and videos files.
- Communications between computer systems has also been greatly enhanced. Connecting with other computers can now be done quickly and easily.
- System security has also been enhanced. Vista will provide you with more security features than older Windows systems did.

These are just a few of the hundreds of new features you will find in Vista. To read about more of them download the *Windows Vista Product Guide* found on the Microsoft's web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsvista/getready/preview/>.

Interested and excited about Windows Vista? You should be. This is a very

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important change in how we use our computers. So, what do you need to do to get your computer ready for Windows Vista?

Microsoft suggests two ways to move to Windows Vista. They are as follows:

- Do a Clean Install of Vista on top of your old WinXP operating system. This replaces your WinXP system with a new Windows Vista system. You will have to save all of your data files and settings from your old system before installing Vista and then put them back on your hard drive after Vista is installed. You will also need to reinstall all of your application programs from their original CDs. This is a lot of work, but it should give you a cleaner Vista system. Unfortunately, in the process you will destroy your old WinXP system. I consider this approach too risky for my use.
- Do an in-place upgrade of your old WinXP operating system with Windows Vista. This will install Windows Vista on top of your old operating system, but will keep all of your application programs and data files from your old system in the Windows Vista replacement. This is an easier way to go, but if things don't work, you have just destroyed your old working WinXP system in the process. Again, too risky for my liking.

So, how can you get to Windows Vista and still have the protection of your working WinXP system while you are getting use to Windows Vista? The secret is that you setup your computer's hard drive to run multiple operating systems. That will give you the ability to run both your current WinXP operating system and the new Windows Vista operating system on the same computer. This is easy to do with the right software tools.

First, you need to set up a logical Data partition on your main hard drive to hold all of the data files. Then you can access those data files from either of the two operating systems you are using. To do this, you need a partitioning utility like **Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0**. More about this excellent utility later.

Once you have moved all of your data files from your WinXP partition to this new Data partition you will be ready to install Vista. You can do this in the following ways:

- Multiple Operating Systems with a Clean Install of Windows Vista. Us-

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ing the top rated partitioning utility, **Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0**, you set up a second primary partition on your main computer. Then you install a Clean version of Windows Vista in this second primary partition on your main hard drive. When you are done, you can switch back and forth between your WinXP operating system and your new Windows Vista operating system using the **OS Selector** utility that comes with **Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0**. This lets you keep your working WinXP system while you are building your new Windows Vista system. You will need to install any application programs in the Windows Vista partition that you want to run under Vista. This will give you the cleanest installation of Vista possible.

- Multiple Operating Systems with an Upgrade Install of Windows Vista. Also using the partitioning utility, **Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0**, you set up an empty space on your main computer where your Vista primary partition will reside. Then you copy your WinXP operating system partition into this empty space on your hard drive. This gives you two primary partitions, each with WinXP installed in it and running. Next, you do a Windows Vista upgrade install into the partition with the copy of WinXP. This will replace WinXP in that one partition with Windows Vista, but still keep your application programs and settings. You can switch back and forth between the two operating systems using the **OS Selector** utility that comes with **Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0**. This is the easiest way to get to Windows Vista from WinXP.

By using multiple operating systems on your computer to run both WinXP and Windows Vista, you do not risk having to burn your WinXP bridges before you are comfortable with Windows Vista. This gives you the time to test out your application programs and get everything working on your new Windows Vista system before you commit to using it exclusively. Once you are satisfied that Windows Vista works perfectly for you, then you can discard the old WinXP system and only use Windows Vista. It may be several months before you finally get rid of WinXP. You do not need to get rid of it the day you first install Windows Vista like the two Microsoft options suggest.

To help you move to Window Vista, we are putting several things in place. First, you will need a copy of the excellent partitioning utility, **Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0**. This product normally sells for \$50, but we offer it to user group members and their friends for a discounted price of \$29 in our Fall Special bundle. You will also get a copy of our tutorial, *Getting Ready*

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for *Windows Vista* in the Fall Special bundle. Both of these for only \$29 is an outstanding bargain and one that you won't want to miss. Order yours today from our web site at www.usergroupstore.com. Look for the Fall Special and use the order code of UGFAL06 to complete your order.

To help you understand and use **Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0** to get ready for *Windows Vista*, we have just completed a new tutorial titled, *Getting Ready for Windows Vista*. You can view it on our web site at www.ugr.com/tutorials.html. This will help you to better understand the steps needed to set up multiple operating systems on your computer. Those ordering our Fall Special on a CD will receive the tutorial CD with their order. Finally, we are working on a detailed step-by-step technical paper titled, *Using Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0 to Install Windows Vista*. This paper should be available around the end of October on our web site. We want your move to *Windows Vista* to be successful, so we are offering you all of these tutorials and papers to help you get there as planned.

Be one of the first to use the exciting new *Windows Vista* operating system on your computer and share this information with your friends. We will help you get to that point safely and easily with our excellent products, tutorials, and prices. If you have any questions about this article or **Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0**, please send them to gene@ugr.com. I look forward to helping you if I can.

User Group Relations

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St. George, UT 84791-1600

This is one of a series of monthly technical articles that I distribute to those that have subscribed to this newsletter. You can subscribe at www.ugr.com/newsletters.html. Watch for them and learn more about your computer and its hard drive. If you do not want to receive these newsletters, simply reply and ask to have your name removed from the list and I will do so immediately.

User group newsletter editors may print this article in their monthly newsletter as long as the article is printed in its entirety and not cut or edited. Please send me a copy of the newsletter containing the article so that I can see what groups are running the articles.

Changing Hard Drives

By Richard Kennon, Newsletter Editor
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The time came when the bearings in my hard drive began to sing a little after running all day. So, being the wise person I am, I decided to replace it as a preventative measure. It turns out a job like that requires planning. I am not a planning person. I don't do planning. I am more spontaneous. That is a euphemism for "lazy." My grandmother used to tell me, "Lazy people work the hardest." Oh, how true.

First, I thought I was covered because I had a backup by Acronis True Image 8.0 – wrong! I had one main hard drive with one partition, "C:" and I had never dreamed of running with more than one partition. So, I bought a second hard drive to use for the backups. After the new main hard drive was installed by a professional, I brought it home and tried to restore the backup. It was then I learned you can't restore an Acronis backup to the active partition. When I tried, it wiped out everything. Back to the Pro for a new XP reload with two partitions on the new hard drive. It has gigabytes to spare. The two partitions were named "C:" and "F:" for whatever reason. The spare hard drive was renamed "D:" and the CD drive was renamed "E:". Go figure. I was able to restore my old C: drive contents to the new F: drive. So now I have everything on the new F: drive but my machine boots up on the new C: drive and I can't figure out how to utilize the new F: drive. Of course, real men don't ask directions, so I decided to slug it out on my own. I thought I saw a bright side to this as the old C: drive was cluttered with years' accumulation of garbage. I would start afresh!

The first thing to do is get back on the air, the Internet. So, I went to Outlook Express. First I had to call the ISP to find out how to reconnect. A nice lady walked me through the process, no sweat. Then I discovered I had no address book. Of course, it is on the F: drive. How to find it? After some searching on the web, I found out the address book is in files named, *.wab. Cinch! Just search the F: drive for *.wab files. Not there. Then I noticed the fine print that says it does not find hidden files. A click on "Advanced" led me to a box that allows finding hidden files. It turns out the hidden files are in a hidden folder so it was doubly challenging. It was relatively easy to copy these files and paste them in the same hidden folder in the new C: drive. Whaddayu know? It worked. The message files are empty but I can't think of a good reason to try to repopulate them.

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Now, if I am on the air, it seems the next urgent step is to reestablish some protection. But, first, I downloaded SP-2 and a host of other Microsoft updates. I think I saw a note flash across the screen that said they sent 60 updates. Then came Microsoft Windows Defender (beta). However, apparently all it does is look for spyware. I am not clear on this so, since I subscribe to McAfee firewall and virus protection, I went to their site and downloaded all that. Now, I feel better.

I did do one bit of smart planning Ta-Da! I had simply copied all my Documents and Settings files and sub folders to the backup drive. Copying all this back to the new C: drive was a cinch and it saved all my valuable writings and pictures. Now if I could just find that great picture of Aunt Edith from two Christmases ago. If you ever transfer to a new computer or hard drive, do lots of this copying. Disk space is cheap and copying it back is so easy.

Finding the original software disks that were loaded years ago was not so easy. They were tucked here and there in many different convenient places. That is, convenient until you want to find them. I was mostly lucky and had to purchase a newer version of only one program. You see, I am neither a planner nor an organizer. You wonder how I have survived these many years? I am very lucky.

One other aspect of "afresh" I decided to try was going to Open Office instead of Microsoft Office. This is another ungood idea. Doctors warn against experiencing dual traumas like retiring and immediately moving to a retirement community. Adding this stress to the disk change stress was probably not a good idea. Besides, Outlook Express won't use the Open Office dictionary. I did find the old MS Office disk but I decided to try this as an experiment. So far so good but there are a number of features I don't like because I am used to the other features. I will keep with it for a while

In conclusion (this is what our pastor says ten minutes before the end of his sermon), you will be faced with changing computers and/or hard drives. As the weatherman and some politicians are fond of saying, "It is not if but when." I do not recommend my approach. I have spent many hours on it. Plan, plan, plan. Talk to some knowledgeable people and perhaps even search the Internet for help. Good luck.

PS. I sent a copy of this to Gene Barlow who sold me the Acronis program and this is his reply:

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“Acronis True Image has a cloning function that will copy your entire hard drive to the replacement hard drive in one easy step. When you are done, you simply place the new drive in the place of your old c: drive and it becomes your new c: drive. This feature of True Image would have had your old hard drive replaced in just a few minutes and with one easy step. Next time you need to do something with hard drives, send me a note and I'll try to help you do it quickly and with the least work possible.”

Maybe the next time I will ask before! But, that would have transferred all the garbage, as well.

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IE7

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS

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If you are using Windows XP, in the next few weeks when the Microsoft automatic Windows update appears on your computer, you will be asked if you want to upgrade your browser to the newly released Internet Explorer 7. It's great that Microsoft is giving us a choice rather than installing the new browser automatically. However, questions like these are always difficult for the average user.

Yet with this question, you don't have to hesitate to answer "yes" because the new Internet Explorer (version 7) is a great improvement over previous versions. I have been using it as part of beta testing for the last six months with no issues. I love its many new features.

While the toolbar has been simplified and some buttons have moved to new locations, you will find that the move to the new version is pretty intuitive. So you can continue to browse the Internet with minimal additional effort.

In fact, any effort you need to exert to learn how to use this new browser is more than worthwhile because it has some extremely useful features that make Internet surfing easier and more fun.

First and foremost is the fact that Microsoft has added tabbed browsing. While other browsers like Firefox and Opera have had these for years, this is a new addition for Internet Explorer. Tabbed browsing allows you to open a new webpage in a tab rather than a new window. So you can have several web pages open at once and you can switch from one to another easily. You will see all of the tabs across the top of the browser with the webpage name or part of it on the tab.

With tabbed browsing you can have your favorite newspaper (www.thepilot.com) open right next to the weather, your favorite financial website, and your favorite computer help website (www.compukiss.com). Click on the small icon to the left of the tabs and you can see each open web page as a thumbnail. Click on the arrow next to the icon and you get a text list of the open web pages. You can close any open web page by clicking on the red x on its tab.

The ability to view and to print web pages has also been improved in Internet Explorer 7. In Internet Explorer 6 you are able to change the size of the text, but often that change made the whole web page look askew because the size of the graphics is not increased. Not so with IE7. Just look in the lower right hand corner of the IE screen for the magnifying glass. You can click on the magnifying glass to make the entire web page, including the graphics, larger. This lets you adjust the size while keeping everything in proportion.....a boon to aging eyes and those with vision problems.

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Printing functionality in IE 7 has also been greatly improved. Remember how when you tried to print a webpage the right side was cut off or you wasted paper as a second page would print out with only a line or two on it. Well, IE 7 has solved those problems with a feature that automatically shrinks the webpage content to fit the printed page. This does not necessarily work with web pages that have been poorly formatted, but it does work well for most web pages. Also there are many other printing options including adjustable margins, customizable page layouts, and removable headers and footers.

IE7 also has a search box that can be customized to use your favorite search engine. So you can perform a Google, MSN, Ask, or Yahoo! search without having to navigate to the search engine's home page first.

Just to the left side of the magnifying glass on the bottom bar of the screen, Microsoft has also added a security bar. This lets you change your security settings without sifting through menus. Also included is an icon that you can use to check whether the website you are visiting is a bogus site known for phishing. Microsoft has also added other security enhancements and it is worth upgrading just to get a more secure browser.

The only time you may not want to upgrade is if you are using a specialized Web software program. This caution will apply most to corporations and Web developers who need to make sure that the customized or specialized software they are using will work with this new version.

For the rest of you, take the jump. Internet Explorer 7 is stable. It is chock full of new features. And it's FREE.

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Happy "Gadgetholidays!"

By Berry F. Phillips, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and a regular writer for the CCOKC website and the eMonitor
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Have many of us become "gadgetholics?" Do we rush in mass like drunken lemmings annually, especially during the holidays, to rush over the cliff of technology only to fall even deeper in debt as we race to upgrade to own the newest and the coolest gadget? The Associated Press reported that a poll says Americans are showing early signs of addiction to their gadgets. Fifty percent say they could not get along without computer and mobile telephones, and 40 percent say the same for broadband use. The Associated

Press article also quotes a psychologist who is an authority on INTERNET addictions so there must be truth to this new addiction. Those addicted broadband users are fortunate since "they can get help online."

Is gadget addiction generic? You might be a neophiliac if you are constantly upgrading with the latest technical gizmo. Media Life magazine reports neophiliacs are people addicted to the new. A study conducted by Yamagata University School of Medicine in Japan reports some people may be genetically predisposed to wanting the newest things. Their study suggests the cause may be a mitochondrial enzyme called monoamine oxidase. However, a University of York sociology professor disputes the findings of the study pointing out, "people were far more suspicious of change in the past – so the urge to constantly move on is sociological, not a genetic one."

Do you suppose gadgetmania may be gender related? Reality checks suggest Males, far more than females, are gadget addicted to various degrees. This finding has been a boost to wives who often receive the blame for compulsive overspending while shopping. Jean Chatzky, author of "Make Money Not Excuses" gives this advice to spouses of gadgetholics: "They get excited in anticipation of their next purchase. They get a little higher when they are making it. And they feel a huge let down when it is over."

Compulsive shoppers also put their own families at risk by racking up bills they can not pay. If you think he is simply over-shopping, he needs your help. Offer to be his shopping buddy, which may contain his urge to splurge. And help him find new ways to avoid falling into that new-tech trap by getting off the email and mailing lists that are tempting him or by finding a new hobby to occupy his time." (I am sure glad that I am a single male so nothing will interfere with my gadget shopping during the holidays!)

Why I even understand that Mrs. Claus is having problems with Santa this year. Some say that Santa has global navigation installed in his high tech sleigh and no longer relies totally on Rudolph, the lead red-nosed reindeer, for navigation. The elves in Santa's workshop have been upgraded and some even replaced by robotics as more high tech gifts are being manufactured than ever before for children of all ages. Mrs. Claus is also concerned about Santa's belly that you recall "shakes like a bowl full of jelly" for fear he will get stuck in a chimney, and his deliveries could not be made on time, disappointing millions globally. Don't worry Santa has been working out daily in his high-tech gym loaded with all kinds of the newest and coolest gadgets. Santa who is male, of course, apparently seems to think that today's addictions are tomorrow's necessities.

Happy Holidays from the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and the Association of PC Users Groups!

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E-Mail: Be Less Annoying

Everyone -- including Bill Gates -- can use e-mail more efficiently. And learn how not to do really dumb things.

by Steve Bass, PC World; Author, PC Annoyances.

I've come to the conclusion that everyone needs to take a test before being able to use e-mail. No, I'm serious. You have to take an e-mail test. If you pass, you get an e-mail license. Proudly hang it on the wall. Screw up--send lots of messages with blank subject lines, say--and your license is pulled. You go on probation and attend mandatory remedial e-mail training.

Why am I being so hardnosed? I have a laundry list of ways people drive me wild with e-mail. I wrote about a few in "Get Relief From Annoying E-Mail," my July, 2006

"Hassle-Free PC" column:

http://www.pcworld.com/howto/article/0,aid,125767,tk,nl_sbxhow,00.asp

But I ran out of room in the print column, so here are some more tips, including how to stop being obnoxious with your e-mail.

"I have a laundry list of ways people drive me wild with e-mail."
".. here are some ways on how to stop being obnoxious with your e-mail."

To Whom Am I Speaking?

Sometimes I have absolutely no idea who's sending me an e-mail, and this is a problem. I mean, I'll say something to another guy that I wouldn't dream of uttering to a lady my mother's age. [Sorry, Mom.]

* Don't share. If you and your live-in (spouse, significant other, whatever) use the same e-mail address, stop it. Extra e-mail addresses are free and consolidating e-mails into one mailbox is confusing the dickens out of me because I never know who I'm writing to.

* Use a signature line. Make life easier for me: Add a signature line with your name and e-mail address using the hot-linked mailto:steve_bass@pcworld.com format. It's easier to reply just to you if your e-mail was sent to many people; it's also great for when I forward your e-mail--the new recipient doesn't have to cut and paste your address.

* Use your real name. Don't get me wrong, I love your beerbelly49832@yourisp.com. The problem is, I haven't a clue who you are. Be a champ and add your real name in the signature line. And a favor? Don't use initials.

Do I Need to Read This Right Now?

Look, I'm a very busy man (or so I tell my wife and editor), and I get tons of e-mail every day. I need to do e-mail triage--you know, scanning the inbox for the hottest messages and reading

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them first. But honestly, I can't do this with most e-mail I get. So here's what I recommend:

* The subject is... Tell me, clearly and briefly, what your message is about in the subject line. I delete all messages with vague subjects--Hi, Hello, or worse, an empty subject line (oh, do I hate that!). And make sure you don't trigger my spam filter by using all capital letters, exclamation points, and words you typically see in junk e-mail, like "free," "spam," "mortgage," or "Viagra."

* Exec summary. Give me a one- or a two-sentence overview at the start of your e-mail. "I have a complicated issue," you might start out, "involving a Dell, memory cards, and SP2. If you have time to help, I've provided details below.'

* Save time. Use [NM] or [EOM] (they stand for "no message" or "end of message") in the subject line as a shorthand way of responding with a simple "thank you" or an acknowledgement. This helps reduce the number of e-mails I need to open; many of the people at PC World use the trick and it's increased everyone's productivity.

And Your Point Is?

Once I actually open an e-mail, I need to get the point quickly so I can reply to the sender if necessary, then move on to the next one. But lots of the missives I get are, how to say it?, a mess.

* Use paragraphs. Obvious, right? Nope. I get e-mails with one long paragraph the length of the Gettysburg Address. Break it up into three or four smaller ones. By the way, my limit is three or four paragraphs; after that I start dozing. [Editor's note: I noticed.] And send a test message to a buddy to make sure your e-mail program isn't removing paragraph returns.

* By the numbers. If you have more than one question or point, number them. It makes replying a whole lot easier if I can refer to the numbers.

* Subject shorthand. When you reply or forward an e-mail, it's helpful if you stick one or two descriptive words in front of the original subject so the recipient has an idea of what's in store. For instance, I use tags such as "Update," "Confirmation," or "Really Dumb."

Miscellaneous Gripes

Think I'm done kvetching? Nope, no such luck.

* Attachment don'ts. Don't attach anything executable--period. If on the off chance I've asked you to send a program, stick it into a zipped file.

* Keep it private. Don't reply to a mailing list with "great idea" or "I agree." Reply privately instead. Select a small part of the original message for context's sake.

* Stay plain, Jane. Avoid fancy formatting, gaudy colors, and flowery backgrounds. Two rea-

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sons: first, what's cool on your monitor looks like hell on mine; and second, that extra coding increases the download time for folks with slower connections.

* Dear [InsertName]. Private note to PR flacks: If you can't use mail merge properly, don't.

Be Less Annoying, Take 2: Mail Lists

Last week's newsletter really struck a nerve. My inbox was flooded with a bucket of e-mail (most of it not very annoying). So this week I figured I'd follow up with advice on good mail list etiquette. But before I do, here are some e-mail gaffes that drive readers crazy.

"Stop sending chain e-mails to me--no matter what the cause (little Timmy needs your old Christmas cards to live, canola oil is poison, tell someone you love them, whatever...). While I find them annoying in general, they are even worse when they are the only time you contact me. I'd rather be dropped from your little list. Think for a minute: Do I ever send you such drivel, or respond to it?" --Chuck

"Always use the subject line. I automatically delete any e-mail without a subject line." --Linda

"Check spellings. Don't mix subjects in one e-mail." --Arvind

"Phone home. For conversations that require significant two-way dialog and do not require documenting, use a phone or IM. Do not send an e-mail asking me to lunch in 30 minutes." --Jack

"Stop using those fancy script fonts! They are near impossible to read. And please, no more purple, orange, green font colors. It's an e-mail, not a work of art!" --Mark

Now, on to some mail list etiquette. If you're new to mail lists, or even if you're not, you can learn how to make your messages easier to read, more useful, and definitely less annoying to others.

When Replying to Messages

1. Don't hit Reply All for every message. Avoid responses the entire list won't find useful. For instance, don't reply to the entire list with "thanks," "good idea," or "I'll try it!" Instead, reply directly to the person who just helped you.

Unfortunately, on many lists it's easy to inadvertently reply to everyone instead of an individual. Take a sec and check the return address before hitting Send. The sender's e-mail address is usually near the top of the message.

Another tip: Insert OFFLIST at the start of your subject line when replying to an individual. That way the recipient will know you're not replying to the entire list.

2. Remove the extra stuff. When replying, it takes seconds to snip extraneous junk and leave only essential portions of the previous message. There's rarely a need to repeat the entire thread, and doing so often discourages people from reading your message.

No matter what you do, get rid of the stuff that's automatically inserted at the bottom of every message--the "how to unsubscribe" junk--that clutters up every message.

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3. Keep the subject line short. If you're viewing messages in digest form, the subject is something lengthy, like, "[Computing] Digest 07-13-06, 16 messages." When you reply to a message, it's essential (mandatory, really) that you change the subject to the message topic. Then remove everything from the digest message except the topic and your response.

4. Restrain yourself. It's not necessary to weigh in on every topic, especially on very busy lists. Consider limiting yourself to one or two messages a day.

When Starting a New Thread

1. Brevity is the soul of wit. Just as with e-mail, consider tackling just one topic or issue per message, and keep your messages short. Long messages (more than, say, three or four paragraphs) are difficult to read; long paragraphs are equally difficult to plow through.

2. Use an informative signature line. Keep your signature line short, say, two or three lines. Usually your name is adequate, though some lists (such as one I'm on about camper vans) want a city and state. The point is to avoid sticking in anything nonessential.

3. Stay on topic. If it's a computing list, send messages about computing; ditto for a cooking list, or any other special-interest group. Most importantly, avoid political messages and jokes.

This column originally appeared in Bass's PC World newsletter, Tips and Tweaks. Copyright 2006 Steve Bass and PC World. Read Bass's blog at <http://snurl.com/BassBlog> and his previous newsletters and print columns at: <http://snipurl.com/tweaks>. Subscribe to his weekly newsletter at <http://snurl.com/homeoffice>.

Steve Bass is a Contributing Editor with PC World, a 23 year veteran of PIBMUG, and a founding member of APCUG. He's also the author of PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things about Your Personal Computer, O'Reilly Press. It's available on Amazon at dirt cheap prices. <http://snurl.com/annoyances>

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ACPCUG Club News

AKRON MAIN Library

Maps & Description on ACPCUG Website, www.acpcug.org

NOTE TIME is 6:00PM! This is because while free parking starts after 6:00 PM, you get your parking ticket stamped by security and the first hour is free anytime. So meetings again start at 6:00 PM. Just don't forget to have your ticket punched (..err stamped).

FROM North or South on Rt. 8 freeway: Exit *West* on Perkins Street going down the hill to a third light on **High Street (one-way going South, left)**.

Cross E. Market and *immediately* look for parking building entrance on your right. Go down to lower level for indoor connection to library.

Announcement of Officers for 2007 see below.

Club Officers area code 330, unless noted otherwise			
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Secretary	Walt Ruthenburg (2009)	283-7867	wruthenburg@usa.net
Membership/Publicity	Gerry Schaefer (2009)	499-5623	schaefer@bright.net
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