

ACPCUG Newsletter

May 2009

A K R O N - C A N T O N P C U S E R S G R O U P

May 4th 2009

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PLEASE NOTE

Due to elections on May 5th, We're going back to the Stark location for this meeting only. In June, we'll return to the John Torok Community Center, 4224 Massillon Rd in Green.

From the ACPCUG Editor:

This month includes a number of articles from around the world courtesy of various User groups that are part of The Association of PC User Groups.

Please let me know what you think! Do you like the inclusion of additional articles? What is the right number of additional articles or the right length

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**May Meeting
May 4th, 2009, 6 pm
Dayspring Community Church
1600 Portage St SW
North Canton Oh 44720
check www.acpcug.org for a
map**

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of your newsletter?

Thanks

**Frank Ramsey , ACPCUG Newsletter editor
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From The DealsGuy For May 2009 by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click of Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

***More On Digital Picture Frames**

I talked last month about problems reading the internal memory in my digital picture frame. Since then, it's been an education trying to put it into service. The old adage, "you get what you pay for" must apply here. I received no help from "Smartparts" (the company) tech support. At first, the message was that the lines were busy, call back later, but never any luck. Now the message has changed to "No one is available to take your call." I tried their Web site's tech support, but with no response there either.

I used their Optipix™ software to process the pictures and load them into the digital frame's internal memory, but they went into that "eternal bit bin." I eventually got them into the picture frame's memory (no folder) and not on the SD Card I had added. I then copied them from the internal memory into a folder on the SD Card I plugged into the picture frame. So far, so good, but when I tried turning the frame on to display them, it was showing all the pictures I had on the SD Card, even from other folders I had previously put on it, but it retrieved nothing from the internal memory.

I can't seem to select a certain spot for retrieving the pictures. When I remove my SD Card, the frame runs all the pictures it can find in its internal memory, including the samples not in a folder. It seems like I should put each picture set into a separate SD Card by itself. A bit frustrating, but, oh well!

A friend purchased eight digital picture frames on line as gifts to his family, but two came through DOA and the Internet distributor would not replace them. First he deleted the sample pictures in the memory of one of them to set it up, but then could not load pictures. He spotted a small hole and tried a paper clip to see if it was a reset. All the sample pictures came back and he loaded his pictures again, and then deleted the samples. He also purchased more digital frames from another online merchant and two had problems, but he got those replaced. He said that with those, he could select the folder to get a slide show from. I checked the book for another friend's frame and it also lets you choose the retrieval source.

I had problems when I tried putting text captions on some of my pictures. At first, I thought it didn't find them; until later when I found it was running them last. Huh! How did that happen? The FAQ on their web site says "Most digital picture frames run the pictures in the order they are copied to the memory." Wow, it's getting complicated, but I guess I can do that. Oh well, hopefully it will eventually do "something" I would like. I'm suggesting that you ask lots of questions if you are buying a digital picture frame.

***Another New Toy!**

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I saw an ad for a HP color laser jet printer for \$199.99, but I've seen those ads before and was never happy with the price of the cartridges because new printers do not come with "full" cartridges. The sale was at Office Depot and I also shopped at a local computer shop that supports our user group and offered a Ricoh color laser jet for the same price. He printed the spec sheet and it came out on a machine that also featured duplex printing (both sides). It impressed me and it was \$379 for club members. I receive several newsletters in PDF format and can't live with reading that much on my screen. I've been printing them out by first printing the odd pages, and then reverse the page sequence to turn them over and print the even sides.

My present HP laser curls the paper a bit and even though I try to straighten them, sometimes that printer runs two pages through at once when printing the opposite side and ruins the page sequence. A duplex printer would sure simplify all that, so my choice was made. I went back to Office Depot and saw a HP printer with duplex capabilities for the same price, but after asking how the warranty worked, I returned to the other shop and purchased a Ricoh duplex printer from them.

Unpacking the machine when I got it home was a bit frustrating because trying to figure out the many protective tapes and metal stops to remove by looking at their pictorial brochure, and in which direction and sequence to do it, was confusing. I later found a PDF manual on the installation disk. I called their tech support number and a guy picked up the phone and proceeded to help me, also offering suggestions. He was based in Atlanta, Ga. and spoke excellent English. What great tech support! I called again later with the same quick response. Oh yes, the store salesman didn't tell me the new machine was an all-in-one multifunction printer. I noticed that when I unpacked it.

I printed some newsletters the other evening and watched that printer run them out while I just sat there, and in COLOR. The new printer is a treat, and so was the Ricoh tech support. I copied a color brochure today and that was simple, and a treat also.

***FACUG Spring Conference**

My wife and I attended the FACUG/APCUG Conference and it was a nice weekend. There were about 140 attendees from several Florida user groups, but a few were from other states. There were less sponsoring vendors this year, but that void was filled with other interesting presentations such as "Cloud Computing," "Doterati," "Wikis," "Twittering," "Second Life" and "BarCamp." I had never heard of BarCamp, but it is an intriguing event where you sign up to speak for fifteen minutes about "anything you want" and this "Unconference" concept is gaining popularity all over the world. Doterati is for people locally that work, study, speculate, ask, and answer questions about interactive marketing, media and technology. <<http://www.doterati.com>>. In just a year, they have 500 members and expanding. Watch the FACUG videos for more information.

A lot was packed into the weekend and it was nice to see friends, especially an attendee there from my hometown area in Michigan. Most of the sessions are available for viewing at <<http://www.facug.org/ConferenceSpring/conference-s.asp>>. Two presentations were by APCUG President Jay Ferron, one on Security, and another on Windows 7. If you skipped it, you missed an enjoyable conference.

***Government Discount**

I wouldn't ordinarily include this, but a few readers work for the government and law enforcement

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agencies, and perhaps some others might qualify. ElcomSoft Co. Ltd., a leading provider of various password recovery solutions, announces the availability of a special discount. <<http://www.elcomsoft.com/special.html>> The new discount program enables government entities, military branches, criminal investigation and law enforcement agencies, and police and emergency services to order selected ElcomSoft password recovery products at a discount. The new 20% discount is in addition to any volume or bundle discounts already offered by ElcomSoft.

Check the URL above for products covered and information about ordering.

***Protection For Your Computer**

I have not tried this and there's no discount, but the lifetime membership concept sounded OK for the column. I have edited their announcement to shorten it and we found no reviews on it.

South West eCommerce announced the availability of Spyware & Adware Remover 2009, a new version of the privacy protection software ensuring optimal system performance. Spyware & Adware Remover 2009 delivers features to protect valuable data from getting corrupted or stolen, stop hackers and hinder ID theft.

Spyware can transmit secret personal information such as name, address, credit card number, social security number, driver's license number, and passwords. Spyware & Adware Remover provides users with protection from the widest range of threats, and prevents recurrence.

Spyware & Adware Remover helps find what's eating a computer's resources by detecting and eliminating malware and adware running in the background. It removes disturbances and blocks annoying pop-up ads. Spyware & Adware Remover 2009 runs under Windows 98, XP, ME, 2000 and Vista. The one-time membership fee is \$29.90. Lifetime Membership includes unlimited downloads and support. Further information on the product, and its free evaluation copy, is available from <www.webdefenders.net>.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. 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 at bellsouth dot net>. Visit my Web site at <<http://www.dealsguy.com>>.

Microsoft Releases Internet Explorer 8

Written by Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio Talk Show Host

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WEBSITES:

<http://www.microsoft.com/ie>

<http://www.ieaddons.com/en>

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Microsoft has released the latest iteration of its ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer version 8 (IE 8). This browser is for all versions of XP and Vista, and is a 16.1mb download for XP.

I had tried one of the early beta (pre-release) builds of IE 8, and was impressed by its features and speed, a substantial improvement over what I felt was a lethargic Internet Explorer 7. Now I have downloaded and installed IE 8 on all of my computers, and my first impressions of it are quite positive. I have been using Firefox, IE's major competitor, almost exclusively for several years. I was not alone in using Firefox instead of IE, as Firefox has been taking market share from IE for years as it has generally offered more speed, features, and security than IE. Now with IE 8, Firefox has a worthy competitor which has added features, speed and security to challenge the gains made in the marketplace by Firefox.

Within minutes of its release, I downloaded the new version of IE 8 on my work computer. I went directly to Microsoft's IE website at www.microsoft.com/ie to download IE 8. Microsoft identified my operating system, and proceeded to connect me to the proper variety of IE 8, which I downloaded. The installation process was smooth, with several informational windows appearing with install options. One of the first windows to appear was a statement that the IE 8 install utility was going to download the latest version of Windows Malicious Software Removal Tool, and scan my computer for malware prior to the installation of IE 8. My computer was free of any detected malware, and the installation continued. A reboot was required in order to complete the IE 8 process, which I allowed. After the reboot, a small window appeared displaying the setup sequences of the new software. Subsequent windows offered me the opportunity to install add-ons, and select default search engines. IE 8 imported my selections from IE 7, and asked if I wanted to keep my IE 7 defaults and use them in IE 8, which I did. The final window displayed correctly identified that I had other browsers installed on my computer, including Firefox, Opera, and Safari, and asked if I wanted to import bookmarks (favorites) and feeds from them; I selected yes, and data was imported from my other browsers into IE 8, making them immediately available on that platform. IE 8 did indeed load faster than IE 7 ever loaded, and web pages appeared to load faster, but I have no empirical data to corroborate that.

IE 8 is more feature rich than IE 7, and in many ways appears to emulate the finer points available in Firefox. One feature in IE 8 that offers improved possibilities is "Accelerators" which provide quick access to information by simply highlighting a word, phrase, address, or other item on a webpage. If the proper accelerators are installed, then appropriate information in the form of maps, web searches, translations, email, blogs, and other relevant resources and outputs are immediately displayed.

Another interesting feature in IE 8 that may be of interest to many users is "Web Slices", where the user can automatically monitor desired information, displaying updated information as it becomes available. Web Slices can monitor auctions, sports scores, weather, stock quotes, and other dynamic content, and can directly provide that updated information, without user intervention. If a Web Slice is available on a web page, a green icon will appear in the top right corner of the page; clicking on this icon will add the "slice" to the favorites bar, enabling real-time tracking of the selection. When new information is available about the selected web slices, the relevant web slice will be highlighted. Clicking on the highlight will take the user directly to the updated information.

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IE 8 offers a “Smart Address Bar” which displays recommendations as a web address is typed in the address bar. The suggestions are distilled from the browsing history, favorites, and previously selected feeds, as well as Windows Live Search. If a single word is typed in the address bar, the Smart Address Bar will reach out and try to match the term against domain names, making web surfing faster and more efficient.

I frequently go online to show my L.I.T. students information on the web. Sometimes the fonts on the web pages are so small, that students in the back of the classroom can not view the displayed content. IE 8 solves that problem with its enhanced zoom feature, “Improved Zoom”. This feature improves the resolution and readability of a webpage, while maintaining the desired layout. Clicking on VIEW – ZOOM allows the user to zoom in or out on a webpage, from 50% (zoom out, smaller text, more information displayed) to 400% (zoom in, larger text, less information displayed).

Web surfers are often concerned about their personal privacy while browsing on the net. IE 8 offers a feature, “InPrivate” that allows the user to control the protection of his personal information while online. When selected, InPrivate deletes the browsing history, temporary internet files, filled forms, cookies, usernames, and passwords when closing the browser, leaving no traces of browsing or search history on the computer.

Sometimes a website appears to crash the browser while being viewed, shutting down all of the opened tabs, and requiring a reloading of the browser. IE 8 offers “Automatic Crash Recovery” where if the content in a tab crashes, the other opened tabs are unaffected, such that other opened pages are not closed or lost unexpectedly. IE 8 will attempt to recover the lost tab once it has identified and resolved the problem.

Phishing, identity theft, and web-borne malware have become endemic, and a threat to web users. IE 8 includes a “SmartScreen Filter” which incorporates anti-phishing tools to protect the user from imposter websites designed to trick the user into entering his personal information. The SmartScreen Filter also incorporates sophisticated anti-malware capabilities to help prevent web-borne adware, spyware, and other dangerous software from installing itself on the users’ computer. If a dangerous website is opened and detected, the address bar and window will turn red on the page, and a prominent warning will be displayed on the red background. Other protection is provided by a cross site scripting (XSS) filter, which can detect and protect from malicious code execution while online, providing additional protection. A cute feature, which can help protect from phishing and identity theft is “domain highlighting” which highlights the domain name in the address bar, with the remainder of the address string in gray, displaying the true identity of the website.

Internet Explorer 8 is much improved over version 7, with improved security and enhanced features. Users of earlier versions of IE should upgrade to IE 8. Users of other browsers should give IE 8 a try, as they may be pleasantly surprised. Even though I have been a loyal Firefox user for several years, I will be using IE 8 far more than I ever used IE 7.

Computer & Internet Tips and Tricks by Gregory West, Editor, Sarnia Computer Users’ Group, Canada
From the SCUG Report, February 2009 Issue

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As Editor for the Sarnia Computer Users' Group, I do a lot of online research for interesting websites and also free software. I am also fortunate to have people who send me their online gems. Here I share some of these amazing finds with you.

Remember: The programs you are about to see are FREE and legal and for you to download and use. Try out programs, or simply take a sneak peek at what they can do for you; the choice is yours. So, happy clicking and email me with what you think about these programs: editor@scug.ca

Gimme Back Those Deleted or Lost Files - File Recovery Program

Website: www.recuva.com

Runs on Microsoft Windows 98, 2000, 2003, XP and Vista

We have all done it. You have too, come on, admit it. Yes when you accidentally delete a file from your computer, the Recycle Bin, digital camera memory card, USB stick, or even songs from your MP3 player, this program will help you to recover those lost files. It is a good program to have on your computer for those times when you least expect it and you DELETE in error.

ATTENTION ALL eBay USERS – A Must Have eBay Desktop

Website: <http://desktop.ebay.com>

Runs on Windows XP/Vista or MacOS X 10.4/10.5

This desktop application puts you in total control of your eBay bargaining with an eagleeye live gate-keeper of your bid or bidders. Never miss an eBay bargain again. This is WEB 3.0 at its best. "eBay's slick new app does more than simply recreate the auction site on the desktop -- it makes the whole experience thoroughly interactive and much more engaging" (wired.com).

Catch Thieves in the Act, Live and Recorded Video Security System Using Your Webcam

Website: www.yawcam.com

Works on Windows 2000/XP/Vista

This security webcam software for windows is simple and easy to use and includes most of the usual security camera features such as: Video streaming, Image snapshots, motion detection, and Online Web Forum for help.

The software program is very easy to work with and after a short time you can set your webcam to catch a thief stealing your stuff. The video or pictures are sent immediately to the Internet (where you designate for safe keeping). The program senses motion in a room. You can have the program set so that it will record a video of the thief in action, or email you a photo, or upload (FTP) the live video to a website.

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Real nice to be able to hand over a full video of the thieves in your house. If you are away, say in Florida, you can easily email the Police the video or photo of the live crime scene with full video and photos of the bad guys.

Windows Live Family Safety

Website Download: get.live.com

Website Information: <http://tinyurl.com/24k8fo>

We are all worried about young children using the Internet these days. This program puts you in control of your computer and Internet browsing experience. You are in charge of your children's online Internet surfing habits. You can also monitor Windows Live Messenger contacts and block who they talk to online. As well, you can also block Internet websites too. This is a must have for any family with a computer connected to the Internet.

NOTE: "Windows Live Family Safety is a Web service that's free to people who use Microsoft Windows XP. If you use Windows Vista—the operating system installed on many new computers—you can use the built-in family safety tools." (Microsoft.com)

Connect to your Home Computer While Away with Logmein

Website: www.logmein.com

While away from home, wouldn't it be nice to access files and programs from your home computer. Now you can. You can easily connect to your PC with a software program called logmein. This program is also used by large corporations to connect to offsite PCs. This program will also allow a friend to fix your computer even though they are thousands of miles from your PC. It is easy to set up and easy to operate. Give it a test drive...You will love it.

NOTE: This article first appeared in First Monday magazine, Sarnia, Ontario Canada. A Huron Printing Publication www.huronweb.net/first_monday.php

Reinstalling Windows

Written by Vinny La Bash, a member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL

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No matter how diligent you are at computer housecleaning and tuning your system, at some point you will need to reinstall Windows. One of the most infuriating things about the process occurs after the installation when you realize you have forgotten something important like exporting your Favorites folder. Several weeks ago I reinstalled Vista on my laptop and almost forgot to do something elementary. So perhaps it's time to review the basics.

There are many reasons to reinstall windows. Perhaps the registry has gotten corrupted or it could be an accumulation of little things that are driving you nuts. Whatever is annoying you, a clean install

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is always the best option. Before doing anything, careful planning will keep you out of trouble.

The detailed procedures outlined here apply specifically to Vista, but the general concepts apply to any version of Windows and even other operating systems. There are three main areas to a reinstall. You need proper preparation, the install itself, and the aftermath to clean up any mess you may have inadvertently created. That means you don't schedule a reinstall the night before any deadlines.

Start by documenting any critical login identifications and passwords. If you pay bills online, access financial information, eBay, PayPal or anything else important to you., now is the time to write it all down. Some folks use a password protected spreadsheet file. Others use some kind of encrypted application to store the data. I prefer good old reliable pen and paper stored in a safe place, not taped to my monitor.

Do you have your Windows product key available? You need it to reinstall Vista. Are there any other applications you will reinstall that require product keys, like Microsoft Office? Gather them all, including any drivers you may need to reinstall hardware, like a printer or mobile smart phone.

A clean install requires that you backup your data files. This is especially important if you're planning to reformat your hard drive. Backup email contacts, calendar entries, and anything you consider important. Don't forget anything special you may have saved on your desktop. That's an easy one to overlook.

Have you installed new hardware recently? Any new devices, except physical memory, require some kind of driver software to work properly. You can get the most up-to-date drivers by visiting the manufacturer's web site and downloading them. Go to the Device Manager for a list of installed hardware or use Belarc Advisor for a more detailed description.

Do some housecleaning. Search your drive for files that are obsolete or otherwise unnecessary. It's amazing how much digital detritus can accumulate over time. Perform a full deep virus scan so your new setup can get off to a clean start. Use Disk Cleanup if you want to reduce the number of unnecessary files on your hard disk to free up disk space and help your computer run faster. It removes temporary files, empties the Recycle Bin, and deletes a variety of system files and other items that you no longer need.

Back up the My Documents folder and any sub-folders that may exist. Backup Links if you use Internet Explorer; Bookmarks if you use Mozilla Firefox. If you're not sure you've backed up everything you need, back up the entire disk. If you've forgotten anything, your data can be recovered.

By now you should have:

Documented all logins and passwords

Backed up all important data including My Documents and any sub-folders

Have all product keys and activation codes handy

Backed up your email contact list, and calendar entries

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Backed up Favorites, Links, Bookmarks, etc.

Collected Driver disks

Check everything at least twice to make sure you haven't overlooked anything essential and you're ready to go. Insert your Windows disk and reinstall the operating system.

After the process is complete, there is still work to do. Use Windows Update to retrieve and install the latest service packs, security updates, and any necessary patches. After bringing your operating system up-to-date, turn your attention to applications and device drivers.

If you reinstalled Vista from the manufacturer's installation or system restore disks, drivers for the original software and hardware that came with the system are likely to be either no longer relevant or out-of-date. You may need to visit several manufacturers' web sites to download and install the most recent drivers. This is part of proper preparation, but if you neglected this step it's not a fatal mistake.

Restore any data you backed up earlier, reconfigure network settings if applicable, and tweak the system to suit your personal preferences. Create a system restore point, and do an image backup of your entire system in case you need to reinstall again.

Don't fool yourself. Reinstalling the operating system, applications, drivers and such is never as simple or as easy as it should be. If you plan carefully however, it doesn't need to be stressful.

Online Backup Services

There Are Pros & Cons But They Are Up & Coming

Written by Ira Brickman, President, ICON PC User Group, Inc., New York

From The ICON Graphic, Newsletter of ICONPCUG, October 2008 Edition

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The changing face of how we use our computers includes the latest concept: using programs and services directly from the Internet. Many of us, for example, have found it more convenient to access our email using a Web browser (a.k.a. "Webmail") instead of a dedicated client like Outlook Express. The Internet's evermore ubiquitous nature means that receiving email is as simple as finding an available computer with browser software. Backing up your hard drive using an online service is one of the up and coming online services. The advantages are:

- No need to buy backup software or purchase external USB drives or optical media to backup to.
- Not storing backups where the computer is located secures against fire, theft, and other risks.
- Like Webmail, the backups are available from any computer with an Internet connection & a browser.

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As good as that sounds, some of the other considerations are:

- There are some costs usually involved.
- Backup privacy and security is dependent on a third party and transmitting your data over the Internet adds privacy and security risks.
- You become dependent the backup service staying in business. If not, you are out of luck.
- It takes a lot longer to backup or restore than using a local hard drive.
- There is no imaging which means you are not backing up a picture of your hard drive, including your operating system installation. Rather you are backing up folders and files.

All in all, the pros certainly make trying online backup worthwhile. The cons, however, mean you have to judge how private the files are and how large your backups will be. And the risk of a service folding means you should be wary of using smaller, totally free backup services for anything very critical to you.

There are some well-known, reliable services which can be free to use, within certain limitations. Or for a small monthly fee, you can get all the pros and limit your risks.

If you want to use an online backup services, there are three commercial services you can explore and consider to start with. They are: Amazon S3/Jungle Disk, Mozy, and Carbonite. All three have similarities:

- They require that you download and install a desktop client to configure backups, manage restores.
- Once your first backup is created, the client program then works in the background to backup of new and altered files.
- All three encrypt your data before transmission and store it in encrypted form on remote servers.
- None require you to restore from the original computer.

You can also restore your data to a different computer.

If you search the Web, you will find an abundance of reviews about each of these services. There is much that has been positively written about Jungle Disk and Amazon's Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3). The S3 service is part of a package of Amazon services meant to be accessed through third party software. Jungle Disk is the leading program to do that. It "mounts" the online storage so that it seamlessly appears as another drive in your Windows Explorer. Jungle Disk can schedule automatic backups, but the mounted drive means you can drag and drop to manually backup files and folders And it allows for incremental backups.

This last is important because there are costs involved. Amazon currently charges 10 cents per Gigabyte per month for storage and another 17 cents per GB for the data transfer . Incremental backups mean the transfer costs are kept to a minimum after your initial backup.

JungleDisk costs \$20 after a 30-day free trial. Amazon S3: <http://tinyurl.com/qx87a>

Jungle Disk: <http://www.jungledisk.com>

Mozy, at <http://mozy.com/>, on the other hand, can be free if you use the "MozyHome" alternative, limited to 2Gb of storage. But for \$4.95 per month, Mozy offers unlimited backup of a single home computer. Though not as convenient as Jungle Disk, the MozyHome software makes backing up

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easy and has many backup options..

Carbonite, <http://www.carbonite.com/>, offers a yearly subscription for unlimited backup of a hard drive, starting at \$49.95 per year, with lower costs for upfront payment of multi-year subscriptions. This makes it a little less expensive than Mozy per year. The Carbonite software might be a little easier to use than Mozy. Some reviewers found Carbonite to be slower and the Carbonite Web site does contain a caution about speed.

With costs potentially less than the upfront cost of a hard drive, these backup services are at least worth a look for their convenience for computer users.

ACPCUG Editor's note: We are trying out Carbonite at work for 6 months. It's pretty neat. Once a backup is completed, you have another icon that is displayed in My Computer. Double click on it and you see what is stored off site at Carbonite. Frank

DesktopZoom

A review by Bonnie Snyder, member of P*PCompAS (Pikes Peak Computer Application Society), CO

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One evening while surfing the Web, I stumbled across a free screen magnifier called DesktopZoom. I downloaded it and put it through its paces. And, I was quite impressed

with it. There are those freeware programs that "you get what you pay for," and then there are those that give you a whole lot more value. DesktopZoom is definitely in the latter category.

When you first load DesktopZoom, it comes up with a settings screen, with two tab areas; in the top area, the default is 3) Entire desktop and in the bottom tab area, the Mouse is the default tab. You can type in a numerical size for the mouse pointer and then select a shape and color for the mouse pointer. The "Big Mouse" option is selected by default (if you unselect it, you don't get a mouse pointer at all ... not good). Other options on the Mouse tab include selecting a Crosshair, selecting a thin red Rectangle which helps you focus on the working area of your application (don't use the Crosshair and the Rectangle together because the Rectangle won't move if you do), and another default selection: Hide real mouse (recommended).

Moving from left to right on the tabs, the first tab is for Zoom. The Zoom selection area has two input boxes for the size of the magnification. Default is 3000/1000. You'll have to fiddle around with the numbers to find the best for you. There are three checkboxes, the first is to hide the configuration screen when the program is running (it is not checked, but I would recommend that you check it). The second is for No screen changes when not zoomed (it is not checked, but I would recommend

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that you check it). The third is Stop zoom if mouse in right bottom corner (I checked it because I find it a convenient option).

The next lower tab is for Keys. These key combinations are for increasing or decreasing the magnification on the fly. By default, the Mouse Wheel option, a radio button, With Ctrl-key, in a combo box, is checked. There are three other key combinations you can select from. If you prefer to use the arrow keys instead of the mouse, you can select the Arrows radio button with Without Key selected in the combo box (there are three other key combinations to select from in the combo box). Finally, the Alt-Keys are selected by default in a checkbox with six possible settings for on the fly changes (Zoom in and out; Zoom on or off; tracking and crosshair – each option has a character to press with the Alt-Key to accomplish its task).

The Mouse tab comes next (we've already covered that); then comes the Color tab. There are three checkboxes: the first is for Grey shades (it has a combo box/edit box with seven choices of shades of grey including an option to type in a number of your preference); the second is for Invert Colors, and the third (checked by default) is for Smoothing. You can have all three boxes checked if you wish. Finally, it has an edit box for Show original screen (you can type in a numeric percentage ... 0 is the default). This one makes me crazy ... what it does is show the original screen as a kind of background of the magnified screen. But, it was probably included because somebody needed that feature!

Then we move on to the Tracking tab. The first Tracking option has a combo box from which you can choose three tracking items: None, Caret, Caret + Menu; the default being Caret + Menu. Next addresses specifically Track MsWord Caret (checkbox checked by default). Then you get to select the Tracking delay time by typing a number in an edit box (30 is the default). Another check box comes next for allowing display of a Thumbnail with your choice of ratio (in an edit box). The Thumbnail is similar to a histogram in an art program; it displays the entire screen in miniature in the bottom right area of the screen. Finally, there is a combo box for choosing View. The options in this combo box include Follow the mouse, Static – changes when hitting the border and Static – Jump to mouse. The default is Static – changes when hitting the border. You'll just have to check these out yourself to see which works best for you. For the present, I am using the default. And then, the final lower tab is for Speech. I have noticed that people with low vision will experience visual fatigue with long documents to read. The addition of speech in DesktopZoom is an excellent option when the eyes are ready to give out (or put you to sleep). The Speech option picks up on any SAPI5.0 voices you might already have on your computer as well as any premium voices you have acquired. You can turn the speech on only when you want it and you can control volume and speed in this tab.

There is more, but I really ought to leave some of the mystery so you can enjoy setting the program up. DesktopZoom has many really good features. My biggest complaint is that it does slow down movement on the screen. Ah well, nothing is perfect. Give DesktopZoom a try if you feel the need for some screen enlargement to help you read your computer monitor. Just Google DesktopZoom and you'll be taken to a site for download.