

BITS AND BYTES

The Newsletter of the Midland Computer Club

September 2007

GENERAL CLUB MEETING 7:00 P.M.
Meets 4th Wednesday of the month at the
Midland Community Center
2001 George St., Midland, MI
<http://mcc.apcug.org/>

This month's date: September 26th

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: Virtual PC's
Presented by Joe Lykowski

PROGRAM COORDINATORS
Contact :
Frank Koenig frankkoenig@charter.net
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The President's Corner

If you haven't visited the club website recently

[\(mcc.apcug.org\)](http://mcc.apcug.org/),

you might want to pay it a visit. **Frank Koenig** is our **webmaster** and he has been doing a **great** job of updating the site and keeping it current. The site contains club information, the latest club newsletter (and an archive of previous issues), computer industry news, news from the Association of PC User Groups (APCUG), virus news and a free online virus scan. If you find any errors at the site, be sure you let Frank know.



— Howard Lewis

(The above comments are the opinion of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Midland Computer Club.)

Upcoming Activities

In **September** Joe Lykowski will demonstrate how you can test out a new operating system without wiping out your old. This involves the use of something called "virtual PCs" where you can install multiple operating systems without having to reboot your computer to switch systems.

October will have Frank Koenig presenting some of the new things that are going on in the technology arena. This will allow you to add some new gadgets to your Christmas list.

October is also the time of year that our hearts turn to....Computer Club Board nominations! Give this some thought, club members. New board members

keep our monthly programs interesting and helpful for everyone, even the novice computer user. We all learn, when new ideas and techniques are shared by a variety of presenters. No question is "too dumb" to be asked; if you don't understand something, someone else may have had the same issue and will gladly help answer it, or find an answer for you.

Our computer club board meets the second Tuesday of (almost) every month, except July, @ 7 pm.

Please consider serving on our board and nominate yourself for the position you would like to fill. All positions are open for nomination. If you have a question about what duties are required for a specific position, see page two of this newsletter for the current officers and their e-mail address.

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PUBLICITY		
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Useful, useless and strange (in no particular order) Web Sites:

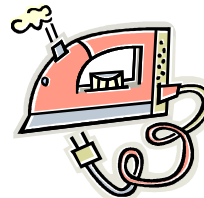
<http://www.poodwaddle.com/worldclock.htm> – Those who like to waste time on statistical information, this site will provide you with the ability to see current estimates on various topics concerning the earth’s population. It lists the number of cases of noncommunicable and infectious diseases as well as the current populations, deaths, births, etc.

<http://www.safercar.gov/> – Enter the information on you car and see how it stacks up in the government safety tests, including both frontal and side impacts along with roll-over.



<http://www.indexaward.dk/> – Recently, Index, the prestigious European design organization, held its annual Design to Improve Life awards in Copenhagen. Take a look and see some of the amazing inventions that won in the various categories in 2007.

<http://www.energystar.gov/> – If you are in the market for a new appliance, you might be looking for something that earns the Environmental Protection Agency’s Energy Star label. This site has a plethora of information on how to live “green.”



Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be
**7 p.m., October 9th, 2007, at
 Chapel Lane Presbyterian
 Church, 5501 Jefferson Ave.,
 Midland.**

Membership Enrollment form

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

ZIP _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Membership dues FAMILY (\$20) STUDENT (\$15) NEW Member ____ renewal ____

Please fill out the above form and mail it along with payment of check or money order to :

MIDLAND COMPUTER CLUB Attn: membership chairman
P.O. box 132
Midland, MI 48640-0132

you may also pay for membership at a regular club meeting

Backup Your Contacts in Microsoft Outlook 2003

The simplest way to back up your Contacts folder in Outlook 2003 is to export the folder to a Personal Folders file (.pst). To perform this backup:

On the *File* menu, click **Import and Export**.

Click **Export to a file**, and then click **Next**.

In the *Create a file of type* list, click **Personal Folder File (.pst)**, and then click **Next**.

In the *Select a folder to export from list*, click **Contacts**.

If you have subfolders below the Contacts folder that you want to include, select the **Include subfolders** check box.

Click **Next**.

Click **Browse**, choose a location for the file, such as **My Documents**, and then type a name for your backup file, such as **ContactsBackup.pst**.

Click **OK**.

Click **Finish**.

In the *Name* box, type **My Contacts Backup**.

Type the encryption and password settings if you need them, and then click **OK**.

Now you have a backup of your personal contacts which can be shared with another person or installed on a new computer.

Selecting Entire Rows and Columns in Microsoft Excel

Sometimes you want to change the formatting to an entire row or column in an Excel Workbook (for example to center a row of titles in a report). To select an entire row, simply click on the Row Number on the left side of the worksheet. To select an entire column, click on the Column letter at the top of the worksheet. Once you have selected the entire row or column, any formatting changes will affect all of the cells in that row or column.

Stretching the Taskbar in Windows xp

If your taskbar gets crowded from too many items, all you have to do is stretch it to make it bigger. To stretch your taskbar:

Unlock your taskbar by right-clicking the *taskbar* and clicking **Lock the Taskbar** (if it is selected).

Next scroll your mouse over the top edge of the taskbar until you see the *vertical resize cursor* (an arrow pointing up and down).

Click, hold and drag the top of the taskbar up (if it is on the bottom of the screen).

This will expand the taskbar to make more room for the items on the bar. Once you find a size that allows you to view the items on the taskbar, you might want to relock the taskbar. Or you might want to leave it unlocked in case you wish to shrink it back down later.

Using the Windows Vista Start Menu

Looking for specific applications, websites, and e-mail messages has gotten much faster with the new streamlined Windows Vista Start menu. To find a specific application or file:

Press the **Windows** key on the keyboard (or open the Start menu).

Enter the file name in the *Instant Search* field (at the bottom of the Start menu).

As you type, Windows Vista dynamically searches file names, metadata, and the full text of all files and displays the choices by file type. For example, if you type "word" all programs (Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, WordPad, etc), documents and e-mails that contain the word "word" will be displayed.

Safe Computing with Consumer Reports

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX; radio and TV show host lwilsker(at)apcug.net

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

WEBSITE:

<http://www.ConsumerReports.org>

In the several years I have been writing this column, it is very unusual for me to write about a magazine. I subscribe to several print magazines, and quite a few online versions, but there is one magazine I especially look forward to each month, and that one is Consumer Reports. While best known for its evaluations and ratings of appliances, motor vehicles, and countless household items, it occasionally does cover computer and other technology products. For those interested in computer security and safety for the layperson, the September 2007 issue is a keeper. If you can find it on the news stand after reading this, I strongly urge you to purchase a copy; if you can not find a copy for sale, then it will likely be worth a trip to the library to read.

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Cars Appliances Electronics & computers Home & garden Health & fitness Personal finance Babies & kids Travel Food

Viruses • Spam • Spyware
You're more vulnerable
than you think

CYBER-INSECURITY
SPECIAL SECTION

What you need to know
Net threats: Why online is still risky
State of the Net 2007
How cybercriminals deceive
Where criminals plot online
Phishing: A growing industry
Viruses: Changing threats
Spam: Better defenses
Spyware: Still a threat
Social Networks: Kids at risk
The biggest threats of 2007
State of the Net 2007
How online threats are detected

Safer surfing
The latest news about Net security
Best ways to stay safe online
Best security software
Is free security software any good?
How to really erase your hard drive
How to keep your new Vista PC safe
Microsoft Vista's imperfect firewall

Forums
Share your Internet and computer tips and problems in our online security forum.
(Free registration required to post messages.)

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Find the right protection solutions for your needs by checking out our latest Ratings of:

Security software suites
Antivirus software
Antispyware software
Antispam software

Consumer Reports' Recommendations

Security software suites
Antivirus software
Antispyware software
Antispam software

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SHOP SMART!
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What makes the September 2007 issue so applicable to us and our computing safety and security is the cover story "Stop ID Thieves – 19 ways to protect yourself online". The bulleted subtitles on the cover are: "New threats to avoid"; "Best software for viruses, spam & spyware"; and "Don't get hooked by a 'phish'". About a dozen well written pages in this issue on computing security and software provide the reader with a wealth of useful and easy to comprehend "non geek-speak" information on the topic. Following the security articles are reviews and ratings of popular desktop and notebook (laptop) computers, which add to the usefulness of this edition. There is also a wealth of other non-technical information in this issue, including such wide ranging topics as ratings of popcorn to health insurance providers to dark chocolate.

In a section titled "Protect Yourself Online – State of the Net '07" (pages 28 – 34), "Net Threats" are explained. Identity theft opens the article, with a statement credited to Symantec, that identity thieves are paying from \$14 to \$18 for every stolen identity, with a cost in 2006 to businesses and consumers of a staggering \$49.3 billion, according to Javelin Strategy & Research. A survey conducted by Consumer Reports found that an individual's chance of becoming a "cybervictim" is about 1 in 4, as consumers continue to fall victim to internet criminals. About 8% of us revealed sensitive personal and financial information in response to bogus emails. Other material findings of the survey indicated that despite the wide availability of antivirus and anti-spyware software, we are still being victimized by the virus and spyware threat. Over the past two years, 38% of us had our computers infected by a virus, while in the six months preceding the survey, 34% reported a spyware infection. It was estimated that 1.8 million of us replaced a PC not because it was obsolete or worn out, but because they were virus infected. Spyware infections caused us to replace an estimated 850,000 computers! Despite the ominous threats, 17% do not have antivirus software installed, and 33% do not have spyware protection.

It was also estimated that 3.7 million US households with broadband internet go online without the benefit of a firewall, a hardware or software product that can provide significant protection from online intrusion by hackers. In a finding that I have personally demonstrated locally, the survey found that fully half of all wireless internet households do not implement even the simplest precautions, such as enabling wireless encryption. No wonder so many of us are victimized by internet crooks.

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As most of us can attest to, spam (unsolicited commercial or junk email), is still a significant annoyance, with one-half of the respondents reporting high levels of spam (page 30). While many computer users reported that their computers had been infected by viruses, one-fifth of respondents had a major virus problem that was costly to resolve, costing an average cost per incident of \$100, with an estimated total damage of \$3.3 billion. While more common than viruses, spyware was also costly to remove with about 9% of respondents saying that it cost them an average of \$100 each to eradicate, for a total cost of \$1.7 billion. Sadly, despite frequent warnings in this column and elsewhere, 1 in 81 respondents lost money from an account by being a victim of phishing (a common form of identity theft using spoofed emails and websites), with an average loss of \$200; that still totaled an estimated \$2.1 billion (page 31). Consumer Reports does an excellent job presenting the solutions to these common internet problems and threats, this information well justifying the purchase of this issue.

Many of us sell or donate our old computers after we no longer need them. What many do not consider is the personally sensitive information that may still reside on the hard drive, and how that information can be illicitly purloined by identity thieves. Consumer Reports has a recommendation on a free software product (Eraser) which can safely delete information from a hard drive before disposing of the obsolete computer.

The media and computer gurus should be shouting out the 19 tips that Consumer Reports calls the "Best ways to stay safe online" (pages 32 and 33). Many of the tips should be familiar to readers of this column, and are common sense to many who surf the net. The tips include such items as activate the protection already provided by your operating system and browser, updating and renewing the operating system and security software, turning off the computer when not used for long periods, consider a Mac, watch downloads, consider an integrated software security suite, run antivirus software, run two anti-spyware programs, use credit cards appropriately, protect personal information, and other great tips.

I am frequently asked for my recommendation on security software. While we all have our opinions based on personal experiences or anecdotal information, the September 2007 issue of Consumer Reports actually tested many of the products available. It is especially noteworthy that some of the best sellers at retail came out in the extremes of the testing, either at the top or bottom of the ratings. Trend Micro's PC-cillin Internet Security 2007 was the top performing security suite (page 36), and Trend Micro also had the top performing antivirus program (also integrated in the suite). Trend's free standing anti-spyware product took top honors (page 38), as did its antispam product (page 39). For those considering renewing an existing security program or purchasing a new one, these reviews and ratings may provide much valuable information.

I do not think that I have ever previously recommended a specific issue of a national magazine in this column. Now, I strongly urge you to get a hold of the Consumer Reports September 2007 issue with the "Stop ID Thieves" cover story. In terms of computing safety and security, this may be one of the most valuable and low cost investments you can make. A subscription to Consumer Reports, which has published other technology reviews in the past, would also be a great idea. Just do it.

Net Neutrality: It's Time For Us To Speak Out!

By Linda Gonse, Editor, Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, California

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What is 'Net Neutrality'?

Briefly, "Net Neutrality" (short for Network Neutrality) is the guiding principle that preserves the free and open Internet. "It means no discrimination. Net Neutrality prevents Internet providers from speeding up or slowing down

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Web content based on its source, ownership or destination,” according to savetheinternet.com.

“Net Neutrality is the reason why the Internet has driven economic innovation, democratic participation, and free speech online. It protects the consumer's right to use any equipment, content, application or service on a non-discriminatory basis without interference from the network provider. With Net Neutrality, the network's only job is to move data — not choose which data to privilege with higher quality service.”

Why is Net Neutrality an issue?

It's an issue because it involves the transmission of data over broadband networks (e.g. DSL or cable internet services). As the number of sites on the Internet continues to grow and the quality of data becomes more sophisticated—encompassing video and audio files and other multimedia applications—broadband service providers (generally cable and phone companies) are seeking to regulate how material flows to users through their increasingly taxed networks. For most large providers, this has come down to one general desire: They could establish a tiered system of content delivery in which companies with data-heavy content can pay a fee to the providers in return for "special treatment" in transmission. *However, advocates project, this also would allow large telecom companies to block or censor things they don't like without consequence.*

Moreover, colleges worry that research and distance education could be left behind if broadband companies are allowed to favor certain content. (The implications go far beyond open access.) The Internet-for-hire has profound implications for education, library and publishing services in general. And, for users, there is either a future of poor service, or additional costs, or some combination of the two. Low and fixed income internet users' would lose their access equality.

What is being done to preserve Net Neutrality?

In a nutshell, nothing permanent has been done to pass a law to ensure freedom of the Internet. It is still a gigantic struggle of ordinary Internet users, educational institutions, online companies—such as Amazon and Google—non-profit companies, and others, against the massive lobbying efforts of the largest telecommunication companies.

Events that have unfolded since Net Neutrality became a significant issue include:

“This past summer (2006), Congress took up the issue. Following a huge lobbying campaign by both sides, including millions spent by the cable and phone corporations, the House voted down an amendment to the Act that would have made the Federal Communications Commission responsible for enforcing neutrality. In the Senate, a similar amendment was defeated in committee, but net neutrality legislators managed to table a vote on the telecommunications bill indefinitely in hopes that they can somehow force the issue back to the forefront,” Bill Moyers, a respected news commentator and journalist, said on the PBS site at <http://tinyurl.com/yhx7lz>.

In January of this year, a bill was introduced by Senators Olympia Snowe and Byron Dorgan to amend the Communications Act of 1934, which will ensure all content is treated equally and fairly on the Internet. The law also requires providers to offer consumers broadband Internet access that is not bundled with other services like phone, cable or VoIP. The title of their bill is the Internet Freedom Preservation Act.

In March, the discussion over Internet governance continued on Capitol Hill. All five FCC commissioners testified in front of the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet.

In May, the bill passed the House Judiciary Committee: 20-13.

In a June 2007 report, the Federal Trade Commission urged restraint with respect to the new regulations proposed by

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network neutrality advocates, noting the "broadband industry is a relatively young and evolving one," and given no "significant market failure or demonstrated consumer harm from conduct by broadband providers," such regulations "may well have adverse effects on consumer welfare, despite the good intentions of their proponents."

We've already had a taste of what can happen if telecommunication companies are handed authority to create tiered service and to have authority over what users can access. Before any decisions have been made, AT&T censored lyrics critical of Bush twice this month during Pearl Jam webcast concerts! <http://tinyurl.com/2gqv4n> This foreshadows what we can expect if Net Neutrality is not made into law permanently.

Pearl Jam appears to feel the same way. "AT&T's actions strike at the heart of the public's concerns over the power that corporations have when it comes to determining what the public sees and hears through communications media," they said.

Bill Moyers provides background and details on the subject at: <http://tinyurl.com/hfyb3>. A video segment from Moyers on America PBS show, titled "The Net at Risk," illustrates the remarkable, but unlikely, cross-section of allies on the issue at <http://tinyurl.com/yuylej>

There are also links to several articles and videos on the main page of our website: <http://www.orcopug.org>

What can you do to support Net Neutrality?

Internet Neutrality advocates are pushing for people to sign an online petition. One of them is at: <http://action.freepress.net/campaign/savethenet>. The petition says: Congress must preserve a free and open Internet. Please vote for enforceable network neutrality and keep tollbooths, gatekeepers, and discrimination off my Internet.

California Senators Boxer and Feinstein do not accept email from constituents sent through third party sites. So, people should email legislators directly, in addition to adding another name to the online petition so the numbers can be used for clout by Save The Internet.com, FreePress.com, and openinternetcoalition.com, who support the legislation. Boxer and Feinstein are already "believers" but it helps to let them know that the base on this issue is widespread.

The SavetheInternet.com Coalition is more than a million everyday people (partial list of members) who have banded together with thousands of non-profit organizations, businesses and bloggers to protect Internet freedom. The Free Press is a national, nonpartisan organization working to reform the media. Through education, organizing and advocacy, it promotes diverse and independent media ownership, strong public media, and universal access to communications. The OpenInternetCoalition represents consumers, grassroots organizations, and businesses working in pursuit of keeping the Internet fast, open and accessible to all Americans.

You can find contact information for legislators throughout the U.S. at: <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/home/>

People can read Google's Guide to Net Neutrality for Google Users at: <http://www.google.com/help/netneutrality.html> and, they should also sign up to receive updates about Internet Neutrality from one of the sites supporting this legislation, such as <http://www.savetheinternet.com/>.

Once people understand the issue of Internet Neutrality, supporters should inform others about the threat to this essential freedom, and encourage their involvement.

Finally, people who believe in an open Internet need to be aware that organized supporters fighting big telecommunication businesses need money to continue and to win the fight that affects us all.

https://secure.freepress.net/05/net_neutrality -- even small donations will help this cause.

Thank you to all who attended our annual Club Picnic in August, with their family members. The food and fellowship were great !

Update to Vista? Maybe!

By Jim Sanders, Vice President, North Orange County Computer Club, CA
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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

The old adage never buy version one of any piece of software, is beginning to look like it should be applied to Windows Vista as well. I have read a number of articles from different sources talking about the problems that people have had trying to implement Vista. I have run into a few myself. The latest involved helping a customer move his documents from his existing Windows XP machine to a new HP computer with Vista Home Premium preinstalled. He was using the Windows Office 97 version of Outlook and wanted to transfer his e-mail, address book, and contacts to the new machine. The problem is Office 97 is not compatible with Vista. So the first thought was to go to the store and buy the Student-Teacher Edition of Microsoft Office 2003, which includes Outlook 2003, while I worked on the machine.

So he drives to his local friendly OfficeMax store to find that they no longer have stock on the old 2003 Student-Teacher Edition of Microsoft Office. However, they do have the new Home Office and Student 2007 version. At the same \$150.00 price as the old 2003 version, that seems like a good deal and is still reasonably affordable. Except, the Home Office and Student 2007 suite does **not** include Outlook and the next version up that does, costs another \$100.00.

A little research found another problem, the 2007 version of Outlook does not know how to import from the 97 version. Seems you can only accomplish that goal by first exporting to Outlook Express. The new computer came bundled with Microsoft Works. Works is not as full featured as Office, but good enough. So in effect, he would be spending \$250 dollars for Outlook. So we looked at the Vista replacement for Outlook Express – Windows Mail. Same problem, it does not know how to import from the Outlook 97 version.

As Eudora knows how to do that import function, and is of course free, I down loaded it to the new machine. It seemed to install OK, and opened when I clicked on the icon. I needed to learn how to do the import, so I clicked on help. A small error window popped up that said “Cannot open file.” To keep a long story relatively short, I eventually Googled the fact Vista has deleted support for the .hlp files. I do not know how many thousands of programs use those files, but unless they are a current program that the author is willing to update, you have a problem if you are using one of those programs. After a bit more research, I found a reference that said Microsoft has condescended to allow the proletariat to download a crippled version of those support files.

In a related scenario, if you are a user of Adobe's software, but not the latest version, you will probably have a compatibility problem with Vista and your program. Adobe has a PDF file on their web site that gives the details of this issue. The location of that file is: www.adobe.com/support/products/pdfs/adobe_products_and_windows_vista.pdf. The way I read that file, new and very current releases of Adobe's software will work or be updated for free. Somewhat older versions of Adobe's software will have Vista updates that you can purchase. Even older versions of Adobe's software will not have updates available at all. As one looks at the up front cost of the Vista OS, the cost of updating one's hardware to meet the decent performance requirements of Vista, and the cost of updating (if you can) your existing software, sticking with XP for a while is looking better and better.

Automobile Computers

By Bob Elgines, Editor, Colorado River Computer Club, AZ
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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups



Is your Engine Check light on? Do you need a smog test? Is your engine running rough? Is your transmission shifting improperly? Did you know you can read your automobile computer results with a simple plug in device?

All autos from 1996 and newer have common plugs and codes mandated by the Federal Government. Some late 1995 models are also equipped with this type of computer and will have on the label under the hood "OBD II" listed. Prior to 1995 some Engine Check Lights in the car were on timers or mileage meter, and would come on after 50,000 miles and really had nothing to do with the operation of the engine or computer.

"OBD II" is the model of your Powertrain Control Module (PCM) -- terminology for the on-board automobile computer that controls engine and drive train. Some automobile models will use more sensors and controlling devices than others. There are Continuous Monitors, such as Misfire, Fuel System, and Comprehensive Components, and Non-Continuous Monitors, such as EGR System, O2 Sensors, Catalyst, Evap System, Secondary Air, and A/C Systems.

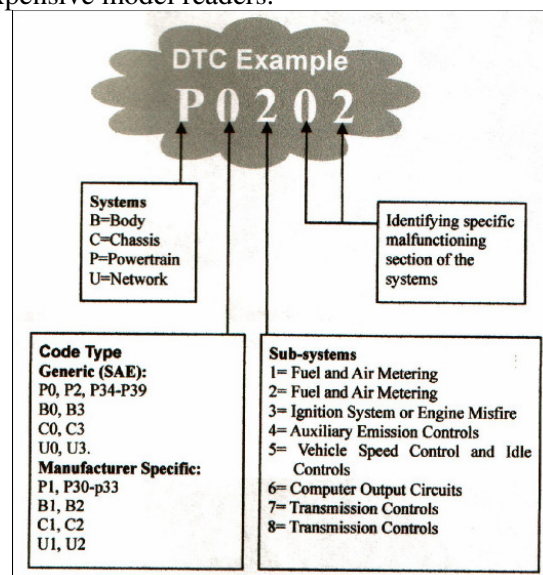
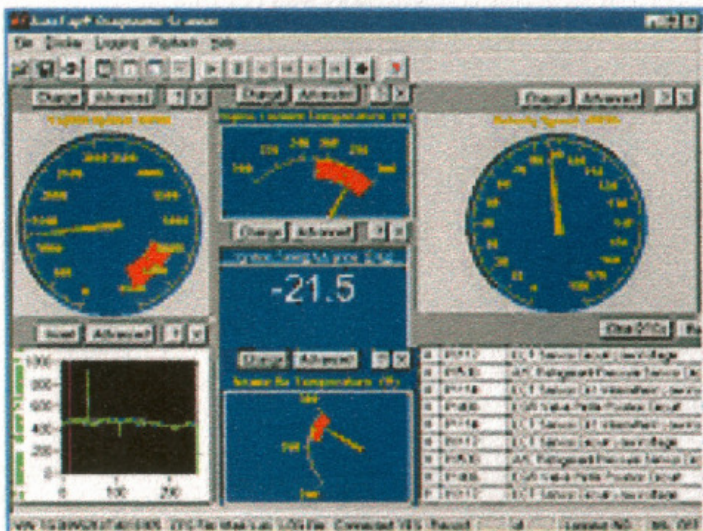


New car dealers charge you \$100 to plug their reader in called a diagnostic test, and guess at what to replace. An example is EVAP codes can appear for several things such as leaky hoses, gas cap, EVAP solenoid, EVAP pump, etc. All these have to do with the evaporation of fuel from your gas tank. They will replace them one at a time charging you labor and diagnostic charges for each item, that can be \$200 plus parts for each replacement.

Simple code readers start at \$40 at Harbor Freight. The next model up costs \$80 to \$90 and the difference is more readings, memory and allows updates via the web (there have not been any updates since 1999). Top models will cost \$200 to \$250, but allow you to plug the results into your computer via a USB connector giving you much more information and possibly allowing some adjustments.

Most Data Link Connectors (16 pin) are under the dash just left of the steering wheel. Below-right is a basic definition of how to understand the codes that you will read. There are at this time 7000 different codes with several being for Diesel engines only. You have Generic Codes and special Manufacture Codes.

Below-left is an example of a readout on a PC of the more expensive model readers.



Hard Drives and Partitions

by Gene Barlow, User Group Relations

www.ugr.com

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Lots has happened in hard drives in the past 8-10 years that I have been giving presentations on partitioning and backing them up. Ten years ago, the largest hard drives were only a few hundred MB. We had not yet seen the 300GB hard drives that are common today. Also, the price of hard drives was much higher then than it is today. So, conserving hard drive space was a bigger issue then.

Today, most of us have more hard drive space that we know what to do with and we see new 250GB drives selling for under \$50. Things have really changed.

In light of this new environment of cheap and plentiful hard drive space, I no longer push keeping FAT32 partitions down under 16GB in order not to waste more than 10% of the drive space. Most users are now using NTFS which also has cluster problems, but these are not nearly as big as the FAT and FAT32 cluster problems.

The cluster problem was that each file needed to be stored on an even number of clusters. So, the wasted space was equal to half the size of a cluster times the number of files stored. The worst case, was when you had lots of little files stored in large partitions with large cluster sizes. So, a 256kb Shortcut in Windows would take up 32MB of space when stored on the hard drive. Hence the large wasted space. But a few very large files stored in one large partition would not waste much space as lots of little files stored in that same partition. Backup image files are about the biggest files you will find in Windows. Some of these are 30-40GB each. So, you may only have a few dozen image files stored on your external hard drive before you fill it up. So, even a large cluster space with very few large image files will waste very little hard drive space. Hence, even if we were still worried about wasted space on hard drives, backup image files would be an exception and having large partitions would be much easier to manage than many partitions that may waste more space because you could not fit large files in a partially full partition. Hence the recommendation to just use folders to store image files on one very large partition. Most users do not have a partitioning utility to adjust the size of the partitions as the drive gets full of large image files. Folders work better in this case and do not require a partitioning utility.

Another change in my recommendations over what they were 10 years ago is that I now no longer recommend a separate Application partition from the Operating System partition and the Data partition. Today, I recommend that you store your application programs in the same partition as your operating system. I do this for several reasons. First, applications want to install in the operating system partition by default. You have to direct them to a separate application partition if you want to keep them separate. This makes installing applications slightly more complicated than letting them install where they want to install naturally.

Hard drive space and wasted space is no longer a big issue, so a larger c: drive is not a problem. In running multiple operating systems, you could share the same applications between two operating systems if you did it correctly. That required a separate APPS partition and then you would install the same application twice into that partition. Once from one operating system and the other time from the other operating system. You had to do this to keep the registry entries on both operating systems correct. Keeping two operating systems in synch with one application partition was a challenge for even the more advanced user, so today, I recommend keeping the application with each operating system, even if it means having that operating system installed twice on your computer.

So, today, I recommend three partitions should be used. One for the operating system and application programs. One for all of the data files. And one on an external hard drive for backing up the other two partitions. This is the best way to go today with our large inexpensive hard drives on our PCs.

I hope this helps you understand why I have changed my recommendations.

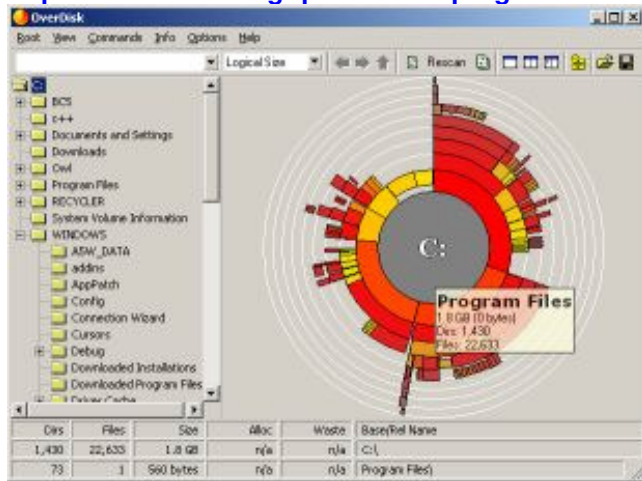
Fun with Freeware

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Here are a couple of utilities I have been using lately to correct a couple of bumps in the road to a positive Windows experience.

OverDisk (v0.11 beta) (freeware)

<http://users.forthnet.gr/pat/efotinis/programs/overdisk.html>



Elias Fotinis, a programmer from Greece, is one of those programmers you often find on the net who in their spare time writes little apps and utilities to solve some personal issue they might have getting the operating system, or some other program, to work the way they want it to.

One of the programs he has written is a disk space monitor called Overdisk. It basically scans a drive or folders of your choice and tells you how much space is being taken up by the files therein. One special difference with Overdisk though, is the way it graphs that data to your screen.

Instead of representing the files as a pie chart, or bar graph, Overdisk shows a breakdown of folders and files as a series of concentric rings, as if you were looking down onto the disk itself and seeing the files laid out below. But it's even better than that.

When you mouse-over a particular section of the chart, a tooltip window will appear to give you more information about that particular folder (size, number of subdirectories, and the number of files); and if you click on a specific point of the chart you can drill down to get the same information for individual files. Clicking on the center of the chart takes you back up the directory path, or you can click on the tree view on the side of the screen to better select a particular folder to view.

I find this utility most useful when trying to identify what parts of a drive need to have a cleanup, or which folders I need to prioritize for backups.

Taskbar Shuffle (free, but accepting donations)

<http://www.freewebs.com/nerdcave/taskbarshuffle.htm>

From the home of the nerd cave, comes a pretty nifty little tool that answers a minor nit I have had with the Windows Taskbar for a while—why you cannot drag and drop the programs listed on the taskbar to better arrange your programs to your preference. With Taskbar Shuffle, you can. That seems pretty simple, and it appears to work quite seamlessly within the OS.

The utility leaves an icon running on your system tray that you can use to turn it on or off, or close it down completely. I've been using it for a few months, and haven't noticed any conflicts with other windows or programs that have caused me to want to shut it off.