

BITS AND BYTES

The Newsletter of the Midland Computer Club

January 2008

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: January 23rd

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: Bill Tower
discussing hard disk imaging ,why you
should do it.

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What you missed!
The **December** meeting had our annual Christmas party with pizza and many goodies provided by the members in attendance. Some of us are still trying to lose the calories that we consumed that night!

Upcoming Activities
In **January** we will have Bill Tower discussing hard disk imaging, why you should do it, and the differences from a simple backup. You will need software specifically designed to capture a picture of your hard drive and write it to another device (second hard drive, CD or DVD drive). If you think you may need to restore your computer to its current state without having to reinstall Windows and your applications, this program is for you.

If you have ever had your system go south and you weren't quite ready for that, you might be able to recover

The President's Corner

It's that time of the year when we look back at the past and look forward to the new year. One of the newsletters that I get was a reflection back on the technology things that the writer missed and didn't miss from the past. I couldn't find the article and I don't remember what was on his list, but it got me thinking about the where we've gone in the technology arena over the past 25 years. I think a couple of things that I **don't** miss are dial-up access to the Internet (or its predecessor) and I don't miss diskettes. A couple of things that I **do** miss is the relative safety in browsing the 'net, the lack of spam and spyware, and the old .INI files that applications used to use. I'm sure that when I put this article to bed, I'm going to think of a dozen other things that I either miss or don't miss, but what is on your list?



Oh, and by the way did you know the Midland Computer Club is 26 years old this year?
— Howard Lewis

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

it by going into something called a "pre-environment." Howard Lewis will be showing how to do this at the **February** meeting by using a freeware program called BartPE. By using BartPE, you can build a Windows XP environment on a bootable CD, which will allow you to recover your data and possibly repair your system. In the worst case scenario, you will be able to restore the image you created using the techniques discussed in January.

March will have Joe Lykowski giving a presentation on various system utilities which may be necessary to figure out what is wrong with your PC. Many of these utilities can be included on the "pre-environment" CD discussed at the February meeting and run without starting up the operating system on your hard drive which may be corrupted.

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Board Meeting

There will be no board meeting in February. The next board meeting will be 7 p.m., March 11, 2008, at

Weird Windows Behavior

By Sandy Berger, compukiss.com
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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups

Have you ever been completely dismayed by your computer? Does it seem to do unusual things that you can't trace back to any of your actions? Well, you are not alone. This happens to all computer users. In the computer world, unusual things sometimes happen. Here is a list of some weird computer behavior and how to combat it.

Icons disappear

Right-click on any open area of the computer desktop, then chose Arrange Icons By. If your icons have accidently become hidden there will be no checkmark in front of Show Desktop Icons. Just click that option and your icons will reappear.

Unusual windows appear

Windows has a lot of keyboard shortcuts that can be accidently accessed. For instance, when I started this column, I wanted to hit the Shift key and the letter "h" for the word Have. However, my finger slipped and I hit the Ctrl key and the letter "h" instead. A window popped up asking what I wanted to Find and Replace, which is not at all what I intended. If this ever happens you to you can usually just close the pop up window, but occasionally you have to look a little further into what happened. For instance, when working in Microsoft Word, it you

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you may also pay for membership at a regular club meeting

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

This month features a series of “time-waster” videos that came from a year-end article from Steve Bass at PC World magazine:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMGBsucl7Z0	This is a French TV commercial saying that to really enjoy a movie, you have to see it. It is a spoof of the trailer
www.youtube.com/watch?v=_y36fG2Oba0	This is a well-done musical called “The Day The Routers
alanbecker.deviantart.com/art/Animator-vs-Animation-34244097	Have you ever wondered what your applications do while you are away from your computer? This flash program called “Animator vs. Animation” by *alanbecker will show you.
alanbecker.deviantart.com/art/Animator-vs-Animation-II-50891749	This is Part II of the flash program “Animator vs. Animation” by *alanbecker. Maybe you want to turn your computer off when you leave it so it doesn’t do strange things behind your back. It could cause trouble!
www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCn3mYR97YM	El Gölge Kukla Gösterisi Great Shadow Puppetry is the subject of this YouTube video.
leoandlisa.iwc.com/index.html	This one is deep (and fairly long)! It is a presentation of the Interrogation of Leo and Lisa starring Kevin Spacey as the interrogator. You have to listen to Spacey’s interrogation of Leonardo Da Vinci on the painting of the Mona Lisa before you actually get to the good part — Leo’s response.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=JujbOPb-Zxg	This is Buddy, a Jack Russell Terrier who is also a fa-

Tips, Tricks & Techniques

Display the Menu Bar in Windows Explorer (Windows Vista)

When Windows Vista is installed for the first time, the default look does not contain the Menu Bar. If you like this look, but need to temporarily use it to access some of the features that it contains, you can temporarily display the Menu Bar by simply pressing and releasing the *ALT* key. Once you are done using the Menu Bar, you can re-hide the bar by simply pressing and releasing the *ALT* key a second time. This will return Windows Explorer to the original “clean” look.

However, if you wish to always have the Menu Bar displayed, click *Organize* and select *Layout*. Next click on *Menu Bar* and your menu bar will always be displayed.

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Add Items to Your Start Menu

Some people place their most frequently used applications on their desktop. But some people also like the look of a “clean” desktop and try to keep the number of icons on their desktop to a minimum. If you fall in the latter category, you can add frequently used items to your Start menu (and I don’t mean the All Programs area). To add an application to the Start menu, simply go to the application icon and right-click. Next, click on *Pin to Start menu*. Now that item will appear in the upper portion of the Start Menu where you typically see Internet Explorer, etc.

To remove an item from the start menu, simply right-click and select *Remove from This List*.

A Quick Way To Insert A Page Break In Microsoft Word

If you need to insert a Page Break in Microsoft Word, you can click on *Insert*, select *Break* and click on *Page break* (Word 2003) or click on *Insert* and select *Page Break* (Word 2007). But there is a faster way: simply press <CTRL-Enter>. When you press <CTRL-Enter> a new page is created at the cursor location.

Moving Backward And Forward In Internet Explorer or Firefox

When you use Internet Explorer or Firefox, you know that you can click the back or forward arrows at the top of the window to move backward or forward in your Internet pages. But there are two other ways to move backward or forward. If you press the *Backspace* key, you will move backward one page and if you press <Shift-Backspace>, you will move forward. Also, you can use <Alt + left arrow> to move backward or <Alt + right arrow> to move forward.

The New, the Best, and the Worst October 2007

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Mobile Supercomputers

Ever since Compaq designed a “portable” version of the old IBM PC there has been a trend to make computers easier to carry around. Soon there were laptops, then notebooks, and by now some are cellphone add-ins. But what if you need more computer power than a desktop can provide?

Large enterprises depend on computerized data centers that support the various administrative aspects of the business and support a network of desktop computers. Those data centers are typically arranged in bulky stacks of servers and memory banks, located in air conditioned rooms to keep them from overheating. Such expensive data centers are typically custom-built, take months to construct, occupy expensive real estate in office buildings, and are as immobile as the Empire State Building.

Sun Microsystems has come up with a (more) mobile version of the typical database center by putting all the hardware in a standard 20-foot shipping container. It has up to 250 servers with seven terabytes of active memory (what we usually call RAM I guess) and up to 2 petabytes (2 million gigabytes) of storage. It can support 10,000 desktop users. The individual servers use Sun's proprietary 8-core Niagara chips that are not only fast but also at 70 W per chip use a lot less power than common server chips.

Because of the standard construction, such a center can be much more quickly built and delivered at a fraction of the cost of a custom data center. It can be parked in a parking lot or basement of an office building or moved to a disaster

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zone, battlefield or third world aid center. Rumors have it that Google is interested for their ever-expanding data storage needs.

Of course, there are still some minor problems. Air blown across the electronics boxes has to be cooled with heat exchangers requiring 60 gallons of water per minute that may have to be recycled through external coolers. It will take a sizable, dedicated fiber optics cable for data input and output, and a big wall outlet with a super extension cord to power it all. And don't forget the nerdy teenager to program it all.

The Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) will be the first end-user to get a Project Blackbox portable data center from Sun Microsystems. The 20-foot shipping container (which will be painted white, not black) will sit on a concrete pad behind the computer building with hookups to power, a 10-gigabit network connection and a chiller located on an adjacent pad. It will allow the SLAC to expand its computing capacity even though its existing data center has maxed out its power and cooling." (From Scientific American, with additional details from the Internet)

Super Jigsaws

If you like jigsaw puzzles as well as computers you may have tried some computer versions of jigsaw puzzles. In my limited experience they were primitive and unsatisfactory, but I may not have looked long enough.

Bertram Nicolay of the Fraunhofer Institute for Production Systems and Design Technology and his colleagues have greatly improved the state of the art. When the Berlin Wall came down and East Germany was to be reunited with the West, the East's State Security Service was in a panic to destroy mounds of secret, incriminating documents in a hurry. Available shredding machines weren't up to the task, so they tore up some 45 million documents by hand. The resulting 600 million pieces of paper are stored in 16,250 bags. To piece the fragments back together would take 30 persons an estimated 600-800 years. Computers to the rescue!

First all the pieces have to be scanned, on both sides, a gigantic task, made possible by technology developed by a daughter company of Bertelsmann, AG. Then the pieces are presorted, based on color and texture of the paper and ink. The scientists have developed algorithms to speed up the matching of edges, and the original documents are reconstituted one piece at a time.

Subsequent work now makes it also possible to reconstitute documents that have been shredded by machine. That task is much more difficult, since all the edges are identical. But already, for Germany's Tax Authority, a bag full of shredded documents has been successfully reconstructed. (From The Economist, 9/8/07, with thanks to Louis Ritz. See also <http://www.ipk.fraunhofer.de/pr/pressekonferenz>)

Amazon

Recently I was called upon to edit this newsletter, a seemingly simple task since it only consists of 8 Xeroxed pages, mostly text in a 2-column format. Using OpenOffice Writer, but with no experience in page layout, I found the task harder than expected. The formatting clearly had a mind of its own, the help files did not help, and it is a wonder that I finally cobbled something together that looked OK.

In order to be prepared for the next time this might happen, I visited Amazon to look for a helpful book. Surprisingly, there was not a great deal to choose from, but one book stood out as the best-looking choice. The OpenOffice.org 2 Guidebook by Solveig Haugland received rave reviews from 9 reviewers. It was also pricey, at \$59.99, but at the bottom of the listing Amazon provided a link to "2 used & new available from \$36.00." Clicking on that link led to an offer of the book, in new condition, for \$36.00. The choice was easy and I ordered the "used" book.

Amazon sent me the usual confirmation, but the following morning I received another note, from the author, Solveig Haugland, thanking me for my order and she was shipping the book the same day. Because the book is self-published, the author is free to sell her books directly at lower cost than the advertised store price. Anyway, a great way to save \$24! More about the merits of the book in a forthcoming newsletter.

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Burj Dubai Babel Babble

Reading about the tallest tower at 2625 feet now under construction, the Burj Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, makes me think of that earlier venture, the Tower of Babel, also in the Middle East, but a few thousand years ago. As you may remember, that project came to grief because the contractors spoke different languages. Now we have computers, of course, who keep in touch wirelessly. Let's hope they all use the same operating system, regularly updated and patched, with protection against viruses and rootkits!

Google

Google generates personal profiles of its users, based on the many ways they use its services. It uses the profiles to target ads based on individual preferences and interests. The ads are unobtrusive so you may hardly notice them. But if you are reading a message in Google mail it is interesting to pay attention to the ads shown on the side, clearly related to keywords in the message that Google is reading over your shoulder.

After Google-mailing the comment about the Dubai tower (above) to myself, including BCC to some correspondents, the message came back with the following "sponsored links" in the margin (hypertext links omitted):

Ocean Front Condos \$118k, 2 - bedrooms or 3-bedrooms Ocean Front, 55 mins fm Panama City
 Charlotte NC new condos. The place to live in Charlotte... All the amenities. Reserve today.
 San Jose Luxury Living. Downtown Residential Tower Dramatic Views. Historic City Park
 Macintosh Computers \$199. Refurbished G4 G5 Macs from \$199 Powermacs iMacs eMacs at Low Prices Tek-
 sale.com
 Trump Tower Chicago. View all available Trump Tower Chicago condos with full details.

Makes you wonder about privacy, doesn't it? I often use Google to find answers to crossword puzzle clues. I wonder what conclusions Google draws about me, based on those off-the-wall questions?

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accidentally hit Ctrl+N, a new window will appear making it look like you just lost your entire document. If you look closely you will be able to figure out that all you have to do is close the new window and the document you were working on will reappear.

If you can't figure out what happened or you get caught in a loop, restarting your computer will usually bring you back to normal.

Lost toolbars

As noted before, an errant key press can cause a problem. This time the culprit is one of the F keys. Accidentally pressing the F11 key can make the toolbars disappear. This is often used as a feature when you want to show something in what they call "full screen mode". If this happens to you, just press F11 again to make the toolbars return.

The toolbar moves

Have you ever had the toolbar that usually appears on the bottom of the screen show up on the side or top of the screen? There is an easy way to get it back where it belongs. Just place your cursor right next to, but not on, the Start button. Then hold the mouse button down and drag the toolbar back where it belongs.

Dramatic slowdown

A dramatic slowdown can mean that your hard disk is filling up. The computer uses the hard disk as sort of a scratch

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Need a sticky note? Put it on your computer!

by Linda Gonse, Editor & Webmaster, Orange County IBM PC Users' Group, CA
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Sticky note programs for your pc, as you might imagine, are a utility that takes the place of paper Post-It notes that we all stick to our monitors!
 But, sticky note programs I've researched this year discouraged me from even trying them out. Sometimes they didn't have enough features, or if they did, they were expensive.

Then, someone recommended a program called Stickies, created by Tom Revell, at www.zhornsoftware.co.uk/. So, I looked at Stickies on the web page, liked what I saw, and downloaded the program.

My first discovery about the program is that it is small, 953Kb, and doesn't interfere with system files and doesn't write to the registry. In fact, Stickies stores all its information in a single text-based ini file. When was the last time you had a program on your computer as well-mannered as this one?

An icon in your system tray will allow you quick access to Stickies' features and options. From this dropdown list you can manage your Stickies notes, configure them, get help, and download new skins. When you do make a Sticky, it won't disappear unless you tell it to, and it stays where it is placed. You can edit, format, and print them. Make as many as you want, or as many as your screen space will permit. But, to save room and keep Stickies organized, they will snap to each other and to the sides of the screen where they can be neatly lined up. You can even "hide" them from view.

Besides viewing Stickies on your screen, you can attach them to a website, a document, or a folder, so they only appear when the objects they are attached to are on the screen.

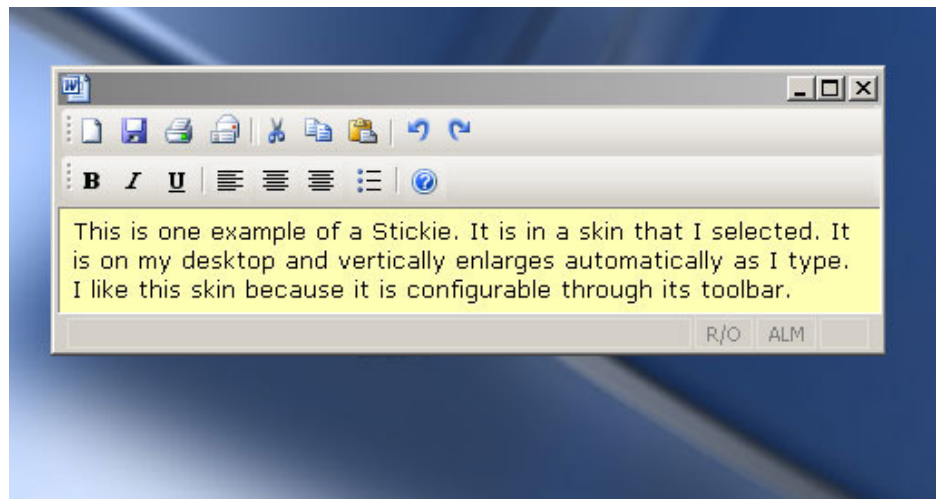
Stickies are portable, too. You can transfer Stickies from one computer to another over your TCP/IP network connection, to your PDA and back again, or send to friends in email.

They can be set to "sleep" and appear on a specified date and time, as announcements or reminders. They can even play a sound alarm so they get your attention when they "awaken"!

What's fun is being able to customize the notes with various fonts, colors and buttons. You can even download customized skins from a big selection to change the outward appearance of the notes — plain, borderless, simple border, etc. The notes can be resized, just like the sticky notes in Acrobat.

Stickies are located in five categories within the application so you can see and manage them. You can search for information in Stickies, wake sleeping Stickies, restore closed Stickies and detach Stickies.

What else? Oh, yes! Another attractive feature of Stickies is...the program is free!
 What are you waiting for? Try it out and see if you like this little program as much as I do!



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pad when it computes, so when your hard drive starts to fill up, it can slow the computer down significantly. Click on My Computer and highlight the drive called Local Disk (C:). Look at the Details area to see how much space is free. You should have at least 10% of your hard drive free. If you don't, a hard drive cleanup is in order. Delete unnecessary programs and backup old files and photos to an external drive or CD so you can delete them from the hard disk. You can use the Disk Cleanup utility to empty the recycle bin and delete unnecessary temporary files. To access it, click on Start, choose All Programs, then click on System Tools where you will find Disk Cleanup listed. It will walk you through the cleanup. Once your hard disk has more free space, your computer will perk up considerably. You might also consider defragging your computer to speed it up. The Disk Defragmenter utility is in the System Tools area. Remember there are other things like viruses and spyware that can also slow down your computer.

No sound

Sometimes the sound gets muted by mistake. Look at the taskbar at bottom of the screen. In the right hand side you will see a small icon that looks like a speaker. If it has a red X on it, the sound has been muted. Click on the icon, then click to remove the checkmark in front of the word Mute. If you don't see this icon, go to the Control Panel and choose Sounds or Sounds and Audio Devices where you will find a place to uncheck the Mute option. Many laptops and some desktops also have a volume button on the keyboard which you can use to mute and unmute the speaker.

Mouse shutters

If your mouse is hard to control or acting erratic, it may need a cleaning. An optical mouse with a flat bottom just needs a cleaning with a damp cloth. If your mouse has a roller ball on the bottom, remove the ball and clean the rollers inside the mouse with a Q-tip soaked with isopropyl alcohol.

Hope this gets you through some of those weird Windows moments in **your** life.

Windows Live Hotmail

by Lynn Page, Editor, Crystal River Users Group, Florida

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I have had a Hotmail account for many years and use it regularly. The latest Windows Live Hotmail is easier to use and includes many impressive features. With 5 GB inbox so you don't have to worry about it filling up while you are away. Safety features, including color codes alert you to suspicious email and spam filtering automatically sorts out unwanted email. You can even drag and drop messages between folders to keep things clean and organized.

I use the full version, which contains some more advanced features but you can choose the classic version. Hotmail opens to the Today page, showing a status meter of mail usage, current news headlines, and a folders view showing how many unread emails are in the inbox.

Color codes make it easy to tell at a glance whether a message is safe or not. The bar at the top of a message comes in three colors: White means the message is from known contacts. Yellow means the message is from someone not on your contacts list. Red means the message appears to be fraudulent.

Control junk email with filters and senders lists. Select low, standard or exclusive filters. I use standard and it catches most of the spam. I also have junk email found with the filter sent to my junk email folder, where it is automatically deleted after five days. However, I look at the folder and empty it daily. After using the filter for some time, you may decide to immediately delete junk email. You can mark a message as safe or unsafe. Clicking the mark as unsafe link, automatically reports the sender to Hotmail's junk email filters and deletes the message. Then the sender will no longer be able to send you email and will receive notification that your address is not valid. If a

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non-junk email gets accidentally filtered to the Junk folder, clicking on the Not junk link to report a message as not junk. If someone is trying to solicit personal data, like passwords or financial information you can report the phishing scam. Click the down arrow by the Junk link and select Report phishing scam.

Maintain your safe senders, safe mailing lists and blocked senders to be sure you get the email that you need. Be careful when blocking a sender in choosing whether to block only the sender or domain.

I like to keep things organized and Windows Live Hotmail makes it easy to keep email organized. Just create new folders and file existing messages in them for later reference. Move messages by checking those to move, then use the Move to drop down menu to file them. The full version makes it even easier. You can drag and drop messages into the proper folder. To delete messages, select the messages, and then click delete.

If a filing system goes awry, you can use the search box above the inbox to find messages in one of your folders or inbox. Just type in a search and select the Mail button. Clicking web accesses images, news, or information across the Web based on your search.

Hotmail can even help maintain contacts. Contacts can be imported from Outlook, Outlook Express, Windows Contacts, Yahoo Mail and Gmail. On the other hand, when you receive an email from a new contact you can easily add that person to your Windows Live Hotmail contact list. Just click the Add contact link below the From: line on their email. And your address book automatically updates anytime a contact changes Windows Live contact information.

You can export Windows Live Hotmail contacts to a CSV file to transfer to another email account or save a backup copy. If you regularly add email addresses to your contacts when you receive mail, duplicate contacts can become a problem. Now when you add a new contact from your inbox by clicking Add contact in a received message and the contact has the same name as an existing one, you're asked if you want to merge them. You still have the option of keeping them separate, giving you complete control over your contact list. Running clean up duplicate contacts searches for and cleans up duplicates. Just choose to delete, edit or merge information into one contact.

Windows Live Hotmail contacts have fields for most information you need and probably more. Add a first and last name, nickname; personal and business email address, phone numbers and address; birthday and a note for other information.

Options provide personalization features to suit your needs. Forward email from other accounts to Hotmail or forward Hotmail to another account. Set up a personal vacation reply when you will be unavailable. The reply is sent to any message that goes into the inbox. If you receive many messages from one person, they will get the vacation reply every four days.

Customize your email by selecting a language, reading pane settings and your email signature. Set whether to save a copy of sent email. You can even have sent mail include a different reply to address. Select the reading pane configuration to make the reading pane appear on the right or bottom of the screen or turn it off altogether. I personally keep the reading pane off in all of my email accounts. That way if a junk email gets through the filters, I can select and delete it without dealing with the message at all.

However, the full version of Windows Live Hotmail has a reading pane so you can preview a message without risk. The reading pane lets you quickly view your e-mail. Email from unknown senders has a yellow safety bar, and the attachments, pictures and links blocked to help avoid alerting spammers. You quickly go from message to message without opening and reloading the page. Double click the message to open it up in the full window. You can also change your inbox layout.

If you like to get an audible alert of new email, set Windows Live Messenger to notify you. In Windows Live Messenger, go to select Options in the Tools drop down menu. In Options select Alerts & Sounds and then Display alerts when e-mail is received.

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To send an email, click the New envelope icon that in the top menu bar. In the full version, clicking the drop-down arrow to the right of the New button opens a menu to create new Folders, Contacts and Groups. If you click away from the email you're composing, you'll receive a prompt to Save as draft. Use font styles, sizes and formatting, bullets, graphics and even emoticons while creating a message. Add recipients to an email from your list of contacts. Or with the full version just start typing the first or last name of the recipient and auto-complete finishes it from your address book.

If you regularly send email to the same group of people create personal distribution lists. Create a new list from your contact list. Just click on All contacts in the Contacts section and select the contacts in a group and then click the down arrow to open the Add to group drop down menu. Choose to add them to an existing group or create a new one. Once a group has been created type it's name into the To box when you want to send mail to everyone at once. Remember to use bcc.

I personally don't use blogs but if you do you can publish blog entries to your Windows Live Space from Windows Live Hotmail. If you have a customized a MSN.com page you can add your inbox to it. Then a glance at the page lets you know when you have new email. You can access and reply to email from a Web enabled cell phone or mobile device. Browse to www.mobile.live.com and log into your Windows Live Hotmail account.

Old to New Computer Files Transfer: Careful!

By Charles W. Evans, Reviews Editor, Hal-PC, Texas

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It's that time of year when many of you will buy a new computer. And one of the biggest chores of getting a new computer is moving all of your stuff from one to the other This review and the one in January '08 should be helpful in transferring or moving your "stuff".

I have the advantage of visiting numerous SIGs each month and listening to individual problems. Moving files or "migrating" programs can be a real head ache, but it doesn't have to be.

A few comments first:

1. When you install a program under Windows, that program not only places most of its files in its own folder (subdirectory). It also places files in various Windows folders. You must move the files in the Windows folders as well.
2. To remove a program, you cannot simply delete the folder. That's only the first step, although not the best. You must uninstall the whole program. Most programs now include an "uninstall" feature. Please use it.
3. Transferring a file or folder from old to new computer just does that – it simply moves files from one place to another. If you have the original installation media, that may be all that you need. Install the program on the new computer then move data files from the old computer.
4. If you don't have the original install media, what then? In January, I'll review a program that will actually move the entire program, including files in the Windows folders, to your new computer.

CAUTION: The trick is know what to move. If you're moving from XP to Vista, keep in mind that some of your programs may no longer work with Vista. And you have to be careful when you're moving full versions of a program from XP on top of demo versions on your new Vista machine. So spend some time up front doing some housecleaning on both machines before you start the process.

What won't move easily? Some programs with security features may need to have the user key put back in or the entire program reinstalled. Anti-Virus software won't move successfully because it is so coupled with the operating system.

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PS: You can also use these two reviewed devices to copy files between your laptop and desktop computer. In addition, you don't have to deal with firewalls or Ethernet - some transfer programs use an internet type connection.

File Transfer or Migration

Belkin USB Cable Transfer

For a basic utility and simplest way to transfer files from one place to another, use this Belkin Easy Transfer Cable for Windows Vista. Load the special drivers from the included CD. Plug in the USB2 cable into each computer and open Explore.

You should see your old computer as another device or hard drive. Then move the files from the old to the new computer as you would move any other file. Suggestion: I would Copy rather than Move. That way you have a backup on your old computer...just in case.

The Windows Easy Transfer Wizard automatically appears and lets you select the files to copy. With a couple of clicks, your photos, music, settings, and more transfer, without requiring time-consuming CD burning or a network.

Belkin includes free file-synchronization software. With "One-Click," PCsync software automatically synchronizes files, folders, music, photos, video, etc. between your PCs. It works on Win98SE through Vista.

What can you expect in your box? An Easy Transfer Cable for Windows Vista, a brief Quick Start Guide (a more complete Guide is on the CD) and a CD with Windows Easy Transfer and PCsync® software. For more info and updates, go to www.belkin.com.

LapLink Migration Kit

For a more comprehensive solution to move your stuff from your old computer to your new Vista computer, look at LapLink's version 11.5 or 12 which use an optional USB2 for transfers. This device uses a TCP/IP connection, which, for us non-guru's, means an internet connection procedure. This Kit is very efficient and effective, but it does require some time to set up AND you've got to read the few pages of instructions. They are non-technical, but you have to follow them explicitly.

Newer versions include a Windows Vista transfer wizard that attempts to bring over some of your settings from one to the other (it helps if you buy a special cable). Simply select the files or programs you wish to transfer and press the button. To assist you in correctly moving files, LapLink has included a "sync" program - easy to use and oh, so handy.

I have used the Vista wizard on a handful of PCs and none were adequately transferred in my opinion. The data files were moved okay for the most part but the process was cumbersome and crashed on some computers when using the network options. There were timeouts and snags. Transfer security is very tight from lockout protection to folder level security.

Warning: It is important to install the USB cable correctly. Do not attach the cable to the computer until directed. Incorrectly installing the cable can result in problems in the Device Manager, and can prevent Laplink from connecting properly. If it is currently attached, please unplug it before proceeding. For more info and software updates go to www.laplink.com.

Not sure either of the above will do what you want? That's understandable. Hang loose for the January '08 review of an excellent file/program mover. ****

**** January '08 Review of file/program remover not yet received from APCUG editor. Watch for it in next month newsletter.