BITS AND BYTES

The Newsletter of the Midland Computer Club

MARCH 2010

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: March 24, 2010

This month's topic: Laura Hammel and Carol
Picard will give a presentation on electronic book readers.
How many people are using them? What is the impact of
electronic book readers? What is a Kindle? Laura will
discuss these questions and Carol will show how a Kindle
works.

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Howard Lewis   lewis3ha@chartermi.net
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What you missed! Larry Piper discussed various email
programs. Everyone has an email program, whether it's
one that came with a computer, one that your email address
provider recommended, or one that your internet service
provider supports. Larry will acquaint us with other options
and why we might want to use different email addresses for
different purposes.

Upcoming Activities: April meeting will be a presentation
on Media Alternatives by Joe Lykowski.

President Piper's Ponderings
"I have a whole box of ISA cards," I re-
cently heard a member exclaim, and he
quickly suggested that they would likely
never be used again.*

That touched a nerve in me, for I also
have a whole box of old ISA cards, and
PCI cards and 1G hard drives, and over a
dozen CD-ROM drives as well as spare mice, keyboards, 4 to 6
printers, network devices and a mile of spare cables. None of
these will ever be used again.

So why have I accumulated all this 'junk'? It is a combination
of the rapidly changing computer technology, my background
of fixing things rather than buying new, a concern about the
environment and mostly because I invested big bucks in some
of this equipment—and by inference, I could sell them on eBay.

Also my conscience just won't let me throw things away; I
would prefer to give them to a good home, as I have done with
a dozen old CRTs.

Having cleaned out two parents homes, I am well aware that
most of my 'stuff', computer or otherwise, will simply get
pitched when I'm gone. There is a running joke in our family;
my two children have warned us that if we don't pitch it, they
will.

So what is my point? Suck it up and find a 'home' for your no
longer used equipment. Donate it to agencies who handle such
'junk'. (They likely will pitch it, but your conscience will be
clear.) Give up the idea that you will one day sell it on eBay or
a garage sale—the stuff is simply not worth your time to sell it.
Or as a final solution, bring your stuff to the monthly meeting
as give-aways or as possible raffle prizes. If no one wants it,
there is always a dumpster is close by.

(* ISA cards came on initial PC models, circa 1981. They have
been replaced by two generations of newer cards. As of today,
there are still 686 listings of ISA cards on eBay.)

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

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Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be 7 p.m., April 13, 2010, @ Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church, 5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland.

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

http://preview.tinyurl.com/yejbxhd
If you or your spouse would like to bake something special for Easter, give this site a try. They have many recipes of things to bake for Easter.

www.readersdigest.com/sillysigns
If you like funny road signs Reader's Digest has collected thirteen signs that are pretty funny.

http://slashdot.org/
Get your morning nerd fix at Slashdot.org!

http://preview.tinyurl.com/yl8y67t
Have you ever taken a tour of the International Space Station? This astronaut will show you the inside of the whole thing from one end to the other. Some places it's kind of cramped, but they obviously have quite a bit of room inside that thing. The shuttle Columbus is attached along with a Russian Progress supply ship and the Soyuz emergency escape ship.

http://preview.tinyurl.com/yav2pwg
Have you ever had problems finding a parking space in a large city? San Francisco is experimenting with a way to help those who need to park their car when they go out.

http://preview.tinyurl.com/ybje8oy
Here's an orangutan and a hound who are best friends.

http://sachsentext.de/en/
Would you believe 155 different ways to play Sudoku?

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

Tips, Tricks & Techniques (submitted by Howard Lewis)

Logon Windows 7 Automatically

If you have more than one logon account (you should have created a "standard user" and an "administrator" account), but do not share your computer with anyone else, you can set up Windows 7 to automatically log you on with the preferred account when you power up your machine. To accomplish this:

- Click the **Start** button, type *netplwiz* in the **Search** field, and then press *Enter*.
- From the **Users** tab in the **User Accounts** window that appears, verify that your own user account is selected.
- Next, uncheck the **Users must enter a username and password to use this computer** option and click *OK*.
- You will need to provide the password for your login account when prompted and restart your computer.

From now on, Windows 7 will automatically log on with that user account.

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Clear Temporary Internet Files Automatically in IE 8

Each time you visit a web page, Internet Explorer stores a copy of the web page in the **Temporary Internet Files** folder. Under certain circumstances this will speed up your web browsing when you go back to previous pages. These pages reside in the Temporary Internet Files folder until the designated space is filled, at which time IE starts to delete the oldest pages to make room for new ones. This creates a privacy concern for many people. However, you can tell Internet Explorer to automatically remove these files each time you close IE. To automatically remove these files:
- On the Internet Explorer *menu*, click on *Tools*/*Internet Options*.
- In the **Internet Options** windows, click on the *Advanced tab*.
- Scroll down to the **Security** section and check the option to *Empty Temporary Internet Files folder when browser is closed*.
- Click *OK*

Now Internet Explorer will automatically delete the Temporary Internet Files folder when IE is closed.

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Putting A Blank Line In A Bulleted or Numbered List In Microsoft Word

If you've ever created a bulleted or numbered list in Word, you might have gotten frustrated because you couldn't easily enter a line without a bullet or number on it. To accomplish this, simply press *Shift-Enter* and you will move to the next line without the bullet or number. If you now press *Enter*, the bullets or numbers will be resumed on the next line.

A Computer in Your Pocket: a Review of the iPod Touch
by Nancy De Marte - Sarasota PCUG, Florida
This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Decades ago, the technology community was predicting that someday computers would be integrated into our everyday life – in cars, phones, refrigerators. This idea seemed far-fetched to us conservative PC users. What we couldn't imagine was a device the size of a playing card that could perform almost all the functions of a desktop computer. But it's true. A few months ago I bought one of these magic items, an iPod Touch.

The original iPod has been around since 2001 as a portable device produced by Apple and acting primarily as a media player with excellent tone quality. The iPod Touch, introduced in late 2007 as a non-phone version of the iPhone, is also a media player, but does much, much more. Besides listening to my favorite songs through headphones while at the gym, I have used my iPod Touch to surf the Internet, read my email from my Verizon and Yahoo accounts, check my stocks, store and view my digital photos, and play a variety of interesting and brain-boosting games, all without spending a penny beyond the purchase price of the iPod Touch.

How could I do all those activities on something which weighs only 4 ounces and has a 3.5 inch screen? First, let's look at what is required to make the iPod Touch perform: a Mac or PC with an XP SP2 or higher operating system and a 2.0 USB port, a free account with iTunes, and a Wi-Fi connection. The PC is needed to recharge the iPod, to download and install your iTunes application from www.iTunes.com, and to visit the comprehensive iTunes store, where you can download free and paid little applications (called "apps") for your iPod Touch.

The iPod Touch comes loaded with several basic applications, including the Safari web browser, Mail, a photo gallery, a notepad, calculator, stocks, and weather. But that's only the beginning. At last check there were over 80,000 free applications available in various categories at iTunes, such as utilities, news, sports, and games. For a total of less than $5.00, I have downloaded several games, including the old Pac Man; media links such as the Weather Channel, MapQuest, and Shutterfly; podcasts, which are free video or audio recordings of public media broadcasts, and some unique items such as a piano which really plays on the built in speaker. For a small fee ($.99 - $20.00), you can purchase songs or albums, online books, TV show episodes, and movies to rent or own.

Each time you connect the iPod Touch to the computer, iTunes opens and automatically "syncs" your iPod Touch; that is, makes sure the same music and apps which are in your library are also on your device, including ones you have just purchased or downloaded. Since I have copied my favorite songs and albums from my own audio CD's to iTunes, they also get synced each time at zero cost.

The most amazing part of the iPod Touch is the "touch." Except for a bar on top to turn on the iPod Touch and a button to open an application, all other tasks are performed by merely touching or dragging your finger across the screen. To see a thumbnail photo in full screen, just touch it. Turn the iPod Touch from vertical to horizontal to see a screen image horizontally. Enlarge the text in email or a web page by touching the screen with two fingers and gently drawing them apart to zoom in or together to zoom out. When you have finished reading an email message, just touch the recycle bin at the bottom of the screen and the message flows into the bin. The device also has an on screen keyboard to enter text or write an email. If you aren't a "texter," as I'm not, using the keyboard took a little getting used to. But I'm improving each time.

To access the Internet with iPod Touch, you need a Wi-Fi (wireless) connection. In our home, we have a wireless network for our two computers. The iPod Touch senses this each time it's turned on. When we were on vacation in the mountains, I found a friendly general store and restaurant with a public wireless connection. Since I don't store personal information on this device, I was able to read my mail safely while sipping a cup of tea.

So what are the disadvantages of the iPod Touch? The downside for many people will be the initial cost. Recently the cost for a second generation iPod Touch with 8GB storage capacity like mine has come down because a third generation version is available. But even so, it costs around $200. However, once you own it and set it up, there are no more fees for Internet or any other function unless you choose to purchase music or applications. And with your own music and photos, plus free applications from the iTunes store, you can have a lot of enjoyment for just the purchase price. There are more and more of these handheld devices on the market all the time. I chose not to purchase an iPhone because currently its phone functions require you to subscribe to the AT&T network. Since my family and many friends have Verizon as their cell phone carrier, I didn't want to switch. Someday soon, it appears that these restrictions surrounding cell phones will be lifted. Then I may look into an iPhone, which has all the capabilities of an iPod Touch and more. For now, though, I'm happy with my iPod Touch.

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Tales From The Trenches: Skip The Trapeze
by Gregory Anderson - Smart Computing
We all have to view PDFs (Portable Document Format) from time to time, and along with everyone else, I use Adobe Acrobat Reader to open and read the documents that come across my email and browser. Reader works well enough that I'm willing to deal with its constant background presence and endless updates. I'm not here to knock Reader into the net unless, of course, you have suggestions for free and seamless replacements. Then I'm all ears.

Every once in awhile, though, most of us encounter a need to make our own PDFs. The format is incredibly helpful when you want to control the formatting of a document, such as a résumé or a newsletter. It's also useful in preventing casual editing of important documentation. It's much harder to edit a PDF (by accident or by design) than to change a Word document. PDFs also generally offer better compression than other formats for documents with lots of graphics, especially when you're dealing with images embedded in word-processing docs or spreadsheets. Finally, PDFs offer near-universal compatibility. Almost everyone has Acrobat Reader, so you won't have to worry about whether a client has the right version of PowerPoint to see your presentation.

When the need strikes, most people either shell out a few hundred bucks for Adobe Acrobat, hunt down a friend with a copy installed, or just give up on the idea. One alternative I've used in the past is a scanner. Most software bundled with scanners offers the option to save scanned material in PDF format. So, if you have a party invite or budget report that you want to preserve or protect, you can print a hard copy and pass it through your scanner into PDF format. Make sure to print and scan at high resolutions to limit degradation of quality. It's not the most elegant of solutions, but for a long time, it was about the only use I got out of my scanner.

A couple years ago, I discovered an even better solution: freeware. One nice thing about PDF is that it's an open format; other applications (besides Acrobat) can create PDF files, as well. Some, like the Acrobat application itself, offer premium features such as collaborative document reviewing and page

bookmarking for a price (anywhere from $100 to $300). However, there are several upstarts happy to provide free basic functionality to those of us who only need to create simple PDFs every once in awhile. My personal standby is PrimoPDF (free; www.primopdf.com). The program is free for personal use, it provides a variety of output options (including screen, print, or high resolution), and it installs as if it were a printer. One nice thing about the "virtual printer" model is that the software only runs when you need it. It's as easy to use as a printer, too. Just select PrimoPDF instead of your normal printer. The program loads, you pick a destination path for the file, and anything you print will come out as a PDF.

I'm sure there are other options out there, and perhaps even some better ones. What have you found?

From the December 2009 issue of Smart Computing. Vol.20 Issue 13, Page(s) 92 in print issue. Gregory Anderson is a regular contributor to Smart Computing and several other technology publications. He keeps a sharp eye (with the help of thick glasses) on computing trends and enjoys working with geeks of all stripes—most of time. Share your tales of formatting frustration with Greg at gregory-anderson@smart computing.com.

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BeWARES!
By Berry F. Phillips, Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City
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The wares have often perplexed computer users with numerous decisions regarding software. The multitude of wares have been even more confusing. Comware is commercial software which generally has more "bells and whistles" but requires the highest financial expenditure without the option to try the software in advance. Trialware is usually characterized on the Internet as a free download for a limited time but requires a purchase to continue using the software. Shareware is also free to download but often has features turned off or has an expiration date unless you purchase the software. Trialware and Shareware do offer an opportunity to use the software before making the decision to purchase. Freeware is free for personal use on the Internet but it may contain adware, viruses, or be poor software. Further, the marketing promotion of the wares can be even more misleading, causing you to download and then delete software that you thought was freeware when you discover it is, in fact, pay ware.

The world of wares can be very frustrating a well as expensive to the computer user. One can spend considerable time, frustration, and even expense downloading and deleting various wares on the Internet. Beware, retailers will not accept returned comware after it has been opened for a money back guarantee. Relax, my holiday gift to my readers is a solution to the problem that I have used for several years, saving me considerable time and money! However, I have had to endure personal comments from some of my fellow computer users that I am "cheap!" Since my ancestry is Scottish who are known for being thrifty, I do not consider that comment an insult. However, I do prefer the use of the word "conservative" to the rather blunt, "cheap."

Excluding my operating system, I have nothing but freeware downloaded from the Internet on my system! Aha, you are thinking, but what about adware, viruses, or poor freeware, and the considerable time in downloading and deleting it takes to find the best freeware on the Internet? There are several sites that contain only freeware. However, I recommend Gizmo's Freeware site because I have used it for several years and found it to be very effective in reviewing freeware and efficient to use in going quickly via links to safe and secure freeware sites for downloading. I am reluctant to recommend other sites that I have not used for purposes of this article.

Gizmo's Freeware is easy to use and makes it very simple to locate the best freeware on the Internet because it is extensively reviewed before it is recommended. Until July 2008 Gizmo was the editor of "Support Alert", a highly recommended technical newsletter that was distributed to over 150,000 subscribers. The site evolved from his highly popular list of the "46 Best-ever Freeware Utilities." The site grew well beyond 46 and reached the point that it could not be maintained by one person. Today, the site has grown into a kind of Wikipedia for Freeware utilizing contributions of dozens of volunteer editors who edit and moderate suggestions from thousands of site visitors. As a result, the range of free software covered by the site is ever increasing and the quality of the reviews are ever improving. Gizmo's Freeware has, in a real sense, become the "Wikipedia for Freeware." I strongly suggest you check your freeware on your system against the recommendations of the best and consider downloading the best.

The primary purpose of Gizmo's Freeware is to make it easy to select the best freeware product for your particular needs. The best freeware programs are as good or better than their commercial counterparts but finding the most appropriate programs can be challenging. There are dozens of freeware download sites but few of these actually help you select the best program for your needs. The site has no downloads just honest advice and useful guidance. Links are provided where you can safely and securely download the product you want. Furthermore, you will know that what you have selected is the best available. Gizmo's Freeware is easy to use and will save you time, money, and lots of frustration!

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http://www.techsupportalert.com/

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Nybbles and Bits
By John Pearce, Chair, WebBoard, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, CO
February 2010 Bits of Bytes, Newsletter of the P*PCompAS
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Last month, I mentioned an article in TechRepublic regarding removing old drivers from your system. Little did I know that issue was going surface in my notebook computer that I upgraded to Win 7. The touchpad on my notebook computer has a vertical scroll area at the right side of the pad. I had no problems using the vertical scroll until I upgraded to Win 7 at which point, it stopped working.

I ignored the problem until just after the January PPCompAS meeting. When I started to investigate and tried to access the settings for the touchpad, there was a pop-up dialogue box telling me that IntelliPoint was blocked from running because of known incompatibilities with Win 7. It took me a few minutes to remember that I had bought a USB mouse and installed Microsoft IntelliPoint software shortly after purchasing the notebook. I had used the USB mouse until I bought a Logitech wireless mouse a year or so ago.

My first thought was to just remove the offending software. Good idea except there was nothing shown for IntelliPoint in the Programs and Features list and nothing for the USB mouse in the Mice section of Device Manager. Connecting the USB mouse made it appear in Device Manager and caused IntelliPoint

to appear in the Programs list. I thought I was close to being done. Surprise, surprise! Trying to perform an uninstall of the software produced the pop-up about IntelliPoint being blocked. I wondered how you could uninstall it if it was blocked from running. This time the pop-up dialogue box provided a link to an update and I performed the update. After the IntelliPoint update completed, the vertical scroll on the touchpad worked correctly. However, I decided to remove IntelliPoint because I no longer use the USB mouse and could not think of a good reason to leave the software installed.

This is the first time I can remember where it was necessary to upgrade software just to remove it. I expect the Win 7 upgrade did not upgrade the IntelliPoint software because the USB mouse was not connected at the time the upgrade was performed. Maybe next time I will remember that USB devices should be plugged in during an upgrade and to make the related software and drivers visible. Even better would be to remove old drivers as TechRepublic suggests.

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Circuit WriterVersion 7.3

By Jim Scheef, Director, Danbury Area Computer Society, CT
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Come On, Let's Get Real

Not too long ago, I subscribed to Wired Magazine. I've read Wired on and off over the years and thought it would be fun to get it again, so I did a deal for Wired in exchange for a few airline miles. Naturally this was online. I have yet to receive my first issue, but I have begun to receive email marketing. The first ad was for GQ Magazine and those of you who attend the general meetings can attest that my fashion quotient is an absolute zero and I have even less interest in GQ.

This is not SPAM; I subscribed to Wired and GQ is another Condé Nast publication, so I click the link at the bottom of the email "to remove this e-mail address from future Wired e-mail promotions". The resulting web page allows me to remove my email address, or not, from both Wired and GQ marketing. I choose both and click Submit. The confirmation is below:

> Thanks! Please allow 10 business days for your subscription for Wired to be removed.
> Thanks! Please allow 10 business days for your subscription for GQ to be removed.

Can you believe this? Ten days! How are they updating the database? By snail mail? A one day lag I can see, but ten? And they call themselves Wired…

The Droid Does

Please forgive me if this column seems a little narcissistic, but I don't buy a new toy every day. After a year of waiting for an iPhone that works on Verizon, the Droid has appeared instead. So I bought one. The Droid is a new smartphone to compete with the Apple iPhone. The Droid is manufactured by Motorola and is available only on Verizon.

It took four tries to get the transaction thru on the Verizon Wireless website on the Friday it was released. Because I have been off contract for several years (I saw no need to "upgrade" my old Motorola E-815 phone), I was eligible for the "New every 2" sucker deal. For the Droid this meant an additional $100 off

after the $100 online discount which brought the phone down to a relatively affordable $99.99 – fifty bucks less than a refurbished 3GS and no one else's DNA to wipe off!

The last step in the order process is the dreaded "confirm" step. After that click, the website displays a nearly blank screen with a revolving arrow thing in the middle and a message that this could take a few minutes. I let one of them run for half an hour before closing the browser window. So that evening I called Verizon to see if any of my orders had gone thru. None had, but the pleasant customer service lady said she would have the phone order people honor the online price. I suspect the phone order guy worked on commission because he was not as friendly. When he told me that I would have to pay for the overnight shipping that was free on the website, I started to enter another web order and, lo and behold, it completes right away. Sorry phone order guy.

So on Monday morning I'm headed for a client site and meet my FedEx driver at the bottom of the hill. He recognizes my car and stops to tell me he has a package for me and it requires my signature. Always be nice to your delivery people so they will be nice to you!

So why get a Droid (short for Android, the Linux-based operating system from Google) and not an iPhone? Well, only time will tell if I made the right decision but the number one reason I did not buy an iPhone 3GS when it came out is AT&T's lousy 3G coverage in New Milford. Even the phone service has gaps. The AT&T coverage map shows only three small spots with 3G in New Milford. One is the AT&T store and I cannot figure why the other two exist but none correspond to where I live or do anything. As we discussed during AskDACS a few months back, AT&T has no 3G service on the New Milford green which you might expect to be a prime target. On the other hand, Verizon's 3G coverage pretty much covers the state. If there is cell service, then 3G works as well. I knew this from my old phone which could use 3G services but to which I never subscribed. [Who would want to watch a movie on a 2-inch screen?]

The Droid offers features that the iPhone lacks – like a slide-out physical keyboard, replaceable battery and easily expandable memory (a 16GB microSD card is included). So is the Droid an iPhone killer? In a word – no. But it is a credible device with good support thru Google and the Android open source community. Top of the list of missing items is the multi-touch screen. You zoom in the Droid browser by touching the screen, a plus/minus thing appears and then you hit one side or the other. This is not as good by about seven miles. Also, the keyboard does not autocomplete words as you type so every word must be typed completely with the attendant opportunity for errors. Fortunately the excellent 3.7-inch 854x480 pixel screen makes it easy to see the mistakes. There is a self-proclaimed detailed comparison of the two devices on Technically Personal (*tinyurl.com/yhd5mkm*) and another on GadgetoPhilia (*tinyurl.com/yz6zy35*). Google users will appreciate the tight integration of the Droid (and probably all Android devices) with Google. Since I have not been a Googler, this is just another learning curve for me. For instance, I had to finally break down and create a Gmail account. What I will do with yet another email address remains to be seen but a Gmail account seems to be required to use the phone.

The iPhone App Store has been the key thing (in my opinion) driving iPhone sales. Android is the only other smartphone operating system with an established supply of applications and a means to deliver them – the Android Market which is run by Google. I have no idea how many apps are available (a news item says more than 10,000) but the number of iPhone apps exceeds this by an order of magnitude. Nevertheless, it took me several hours to scroll thru a few categories of just the free Android apps. By the end of the first evening playing with the Droid my scroll finger was tired and sore. During this period I learned that not all Android apps will run on all Android devices. The Droid runs the brand new version 2 of the Android OS and this alone is sufficient to cause some apps to "close unexpectedly". To the credit of the OS, only once did a crash leave the phone in an unstable condition. Another difference from the iPhone is the ability to install apps directly to the phone. Significant hacking is required to get around

Apple's lock on applications. On the Droid, this is an option in Setup along with the ability to turn on debugging and developer tools. The only significant security block I've found so far is the lack of root access. This won't last long now that the device is out. All other Android devices have been "rooted" and unlike with Apple and the iPhone there has been no attempt by Google or the manufacturers to prevent this hacking. Another plus for the Droid, in my opinion. Now that there is a higher volume Android device, I predict that the number of available apps will grow as existing iPhone apps are ported to Android and Linux developers jump on the mobile bandwagon.

Integration of my personal software tools with the Droid is coming along but I still need to carry my old and dying Windows Pocket PC PDA for contacts and calendar because I have not installed the software needed to synchronize the Droid with Exchange. That's next once I finish this column, AskDACS and SIG notes. Another major stumbling block is passwords. I use RoboForm (roboform.com) on all of my PCs and the PDA to encrypt passwords on websites and web-managed devices like routers. I have 413 passwords in 20 folders that I will need on the Droid.

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Controlling System Restore

By Vinny La Bash, Member and Regular Columnist, Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., Florida
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Did a shareware application you were enamored of turn out to be an unmitigated disaster? Perhaps a device driver installation, system update or modification to a registry key went bad, and your system wandered into an alternate universe. Windows has a utility called System Restore that takes a picture, called a Restore Point, of your system before certain types of operations are started. System Restore is a very handy feature that allows you to go back in time to erase actions you have come to regret. If a problem occurs you can revert back to the way things were, and all is well again.

System Restore, for all its utility and convenience, has its drawbacks. Some argue that if there is not enough free disk space, System Restore will fail to create a restore point, so an unsuspecting person may discover that there is no restore point available when trying to put things back to normal. There is also no way to make a permanent restore point that will not get deleted after a time when automatic restore points need the disk space. This could be a predicament if a problem is intermittent.

It is possible that System Restore may be responsible for your disk drive running out of room. While today's super-sized drives make that less likely than a few years ago running out of disk space could still happen, especially if you load up your system with videos. You can reduce that likelihood even further by configuring System Restore properly.

The snapshots we talked about in the first paragraph are taken by a built-in program called the Volume Snapshot Service (VSS). There is no way to access this utility in the standard Windows Graphical Utility Interface (GUI). This means you can't get to it with a menu option. You need to open a Command Prompt window with elevated administrator privileges.

Click on the Start orb located down at the bottom left corner of your screen, select All Programs, and open the Accessories folder. Right click on the Command Prompt icon, and then select Run as Administrator from the menu. That will open up a Command Prompt window with enough authority to configure System Restore.

(Controlling System Restore continued from page 10)

Before doing any configuration, let's take some time to understand how System Restore works. You can do this with the vssadmin tool. At the Command Prompt type vssadmin /? (Press Enter after typing a command.)

You see a list of all the commands supported by the utility.

(Note: Shadow copy = Restore Point)

Enter the command vssadmin list shadows

This displays a list of all the restore points currently on the system.

The list shadowstorage command displays the amount of disk drive space currently being used to store restore points, how much space is set aside to accommodate restore points, and the maximum permitted size for restore points.

To see what's available on your own system, at the Command Prompt type:

Vssadmin list shadowstorage

Take a few minutes to understand the way the information is displayed. If there is enough free disk space you can store up to 64 restore points before Windows automatically starts deleting old restore points to accommodate new ones.

Making backups is an essential task, but there is no reason why Windows should be allowed to consume every available byte of storage with System Restore points. The default settings allow Windows to run amok but you can reset the maximum value with the resize shadowstorage command.

Here is an example:

Vssadmin resize shadowstorage /for=c: /on=c: /maxsize = 12GB

The /for= switch specifies the disk drive where the storage space is to be resized.

The /on= switch tells Windows where to save the Restore Point.

The /maxsize= switch tells Windows how much space it can use for Restore Points.

If you don't specify a maximum size you are giving Windows permission to do anything it wants. The minimum size is 1GB. I have seen references stating that the minimum size can be as low as 300MB, but I could not verify that information.

After entering the resize command the system needs to be restarted to take effect. Configuring System Restore points won't solve every problem you may have with Windows, but it will give you more control of how Windows allocates resources.

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Things, Thinglets & Thingassoes

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The Bad Guys are after Your Money

Well, that's nothing new.

Just as knowing the "computer language" is good to assist communication when seeking help or offering help to others, so is knowing the definition of words to describe cybercrime.

Just to better understand the nomenclature of cyber assaults, one has to be able to understand the lingo. I researched the Internet (some very helpful "e-letters") and came up with this handy list:

"Adware"
A piece of software that displays advertisements on a computer after the software is installed. Adware can be benign, as in the case of a free program that displays ads in a manner that is agreed upon in advance. Or adware can be a nuisance, displaying unwanted ads with no apparent way to remove the program. The nuisance variety is often silently downloaded along with some other desired software, such as a game or toolbar.

"Arbitrary Code Execution"
When a security vulnerability is discovered in a piece of software, sometimes it is said that it allows for "arbitrary code" to be executed on the machine. This really means that the vulnerability can be used to cause that program to execute ANY set of commands or instructions on that computer.

"Black Hat"
A "bad guy" or hacker who breaks into computer networks, creates viruses, sends spam, or uses unethical tactics to influence engine results.

"Ethical Hacker"
A "good hacker" who uses a variety of techniques to test the safety of a computer network or system software. Typically an ethical hacker (also known as a "White Hat") is hired by a company to see if there are any flaws in its systems that might allow Black Hats to gain entry.

"Botnet"
A collection of ordinary home and office computers that have been compromised by rogue software. The term "botnet" is short for "robot network" and describes the situation rather well. Computers that have been caught up in a botnet have been effectively taken over and can be used to perform almost any task by the person or persons who control the botnet. Botnets are controlled by criminals and other miscreants whose motives include spewing spam to sell products, operating financial scams, and crippling websites through coordinated attacks. (See "Denial of Service Attack".)

"Buffer Overrun"
This is a flaw in a computer program that occurs when the length of a user input is not validated. For example, if a program is expecting a 9-digit social security number as input, it should discard any input beyond the 9th character. If the program blindly accepts a longer input string, it could "overrun" the input

buffer, thereby trashing some other part of the currently-running program with the extraneous characters. In some cases, this flaw can be used to overwrite the existing program with code that comes from the input string. (See "Arbitrary Code Execution".)

"Denial of Service Attack"
A concerted effort by one or more remote attackers that attempts to flood a web server or network with meaningless requests. A sustained, coordinated attack can render the target unable to service the legitimate users who are attempting to connect.

"Exploit"
A method of taking advantage of a bug or security hole in a computer program. It is possible that a hole may be known to exist, but no exploit has yet been created to capitalize on it.

"Malware"
Any form of malicious software. This can include computer viruses, spyware, worms, trojan horses, rootkits, and other software that is deliberately harmful, destructive, or invasive.

"Patch"
A fix for a software bug or security hole. When a bug is discovered, often there is a race by software vendors to provide a patch before an Exploit is created. Patches must be applied to the affected computers in order to prevent exploitation of the flaw.

"Phishing"
The act of stealing information using lies or deception as bait. Online scammers try to trick people into voluntarily providing passwords, account numbers, and other personal information by pretending to be someone they trust. An example of phishing is an e-mail that appears to be from a bank, asking recipients to log in to a rogue site that looks exactly like the real one. When the victim logs in, the operators of the fake site then have that person's login credentials and can access his or her bank account.

"Rootkit"
A rootkit is a software tool (or a set of programs) designed to conceal files, data, or active processes from the operating system. Because of their ability to hide deep in the operating system, rootkits are hard to detect and remove. Although rootkits may not cause damage when installed, they are often piggy-backed with additional code written for the purpose of taking control of a computer, disabling certain functions, or spying on the user and reporting activities back to the rootkit creator.

"Scareware"
Software that is created for the purpose of tricking people into downloading or purchasing it, when in reality it is either unnecessary, marginally useful, or outright dangerous. Online ads that display fake warnings such as "Your computer may be infected—click here to scan for viruses" or "ERROR! Registry Damage Detected—click to download Registry Cleaner" would qualify as scareware. Scareware programs often run a fake or cursory scan, then present the user with a list of hazards that must be corrected. Fixing these "problems" then requires the user to pay a fee for a "full" or "registered" version of the software.

"Skimming"
The act of stealing credit or debit card information while a legitimate transaction is taking place at an ATM (Automatic Teller Machine). Skimming involves an unauthorized device that is attached to the

card slot of the ATM, which reads the magnetic strip as the card passes through. A hidden camera may also be used to capture the victim's PIN (Personal Identification Number).

"Spyware"

Spyware is a type of malicious software designed to take action on a computer without the informed consent of the user. Spyware may surreptitiously monitor the user, reporting personal information to a remote site, or subvert the computer's operation for the benefit of a third party. Some spyware tracks what types of websites a user visits and send this information to an advertising agency. Others may launch annoying popup advertisements. More malicious versions try to intercept passwords or credit card numbers.

"Trojan Horse"

A Trojan horse is a malicious program that is disguised or embedded within other software. The term is derived from the classical myth of the Trojan Horse. Such a program may look useful or interesting but is actually harmful when executed.

Examples may include web browser toolbars, games, and file sharing programs. A Trojan horse cannot operate or spread on its own, so it relies on a social engineering approach (tricking the user into taking some action) rather than flaws in a computer's security.

"Virus"

A computer virus is a malicious self-replicating computer program that spreads by inserting copies of itself into other programs or documents, similar to the way a real virus operates. When the infected program or document is opened, the destructive action (payload) is repeated, resulting in the infection, destruction, or deletion of other files.

Sometimes the infected programs continue to function normally, albeit with the side effects of the virus; in other cases, the original program is crippled or destroyed.

"Worm"

A worm is a malicious computer program that is self-contained and does not need help from another program to propagate itself. It can spread by trying to infect other files on a local network or by exploiting the host computer's e-mail transmission capabilities to send copies of itself to everyone found in the e-mail address book. Some even look in the cache of recently visited web pages and extract other e-mail addresses to target.

"Zero-Day Exploit"

An attack that tries to exploit unpatched security vulnerabilities. The term "zero day" derives from the fact that software vendors sometimes have a window of time to fix a problem before an exploit is developed or before news of a vulnerability is made public. But when the exploit already exists before a patch is released, the vendors have "zero days" to fix it because users are already exposed.

"Zombie"

A computer that has been compromised and can be controlled over a network to do the bidding of a criminal or miscreant. Computers that have been caught up in a botnet are zombies and can be used by the controller of the botnet to send spam or participate in a coordinated denial of service attack.