

# BITS AND BYTES

February 2012

Newsletter of the Midland Computer Club

<http://mcc.apcug.org/>

## **GENERAL CLUB MEETING 7:00 P.M.**

4th Wednesday of the month at the  
Midland Community Center  
2001 George St., Midland, MI

**This month's date:**  
February 22, 2012

**This month's topic:**  
Cloud examples - Larry Piper

**What you missed!**  
Tablets - Lynn Walker and Al Adams

**Upcoming Activities:**  
March — Routers - Howard Lewis

**Program Coordinators**  
Howard Lewis            lewis3ha@chartermi.net  
Bill Tower                stressed@tir.com

Please let Howard or Bill know of topics you would like covered at future meetings.

## **President Piper's Ponderings**

Since I have no great agendas or any specific goals to meet, I sort of wander aimlessly along as your President. My duties are simply to: hold a Board meeting, write a monthly column and run our General meeting—probably a 'cave man' could handle that.



But in February the gods conspired to make even these menial tasks difficult for me. First, there were the two visits to the ER; nothing serious, but I was 'grounded' for 10 days each time. My work on this month's Cloud presentation went from having plenty of time to last minute panic. Then there was the planned, but very time consuming process of changing to a new family doctor.

While I was 'confined to quarters', I decide to make good use of my sitting time by backing up all my computers. I have a website that offers me 'unlimited' storage, so I figured that is my best backup solution. After three days of taking advantage of Charter's faster internet speeds to upload my data, I get a 'nastygram' from my host which tells me I am in violation of their Terms of Service. Also, I must 'unload' all the work I have done the past three days, or they will cancel my account. It seems they have a different definition of unlimited.

The Wolverine bank is currently on its third iteration to resolve some details of our Club account, but fortunately nothing that has a time deadline. I survived Valentine's Day OK, but then our hot water heater mysteriously springs a leak—another day shot. The last straw was the arrival of the SI swimsuit issue; I leave it to the reader to ascertain whether this was a plus or minus in my day. So I am in an Andy Rooney mood—I feel like complaining.

But on the bright side, at one of my ER visits the doctor said, "your records are better than what we have at the hospital." Organization has always been one of my chief traits. So I am happy to report that one of our members

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### Board Meeting

Next board meeting will be  
 7 p.m., March 13, 2012, at  
 Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church,  
 5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland MI

### President Piper's Ponderings (continued)

will be giving a presentation on this topic that is so near to my heart. It likely will be titled "Disaster Preparation in the Digital Age." Start thinking what you would do.

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

### Useful, useless and strange (in no particular order) Web Sites (submitted by Howard Lewis):

If you don't like the fact that Google and Bing track all of your searches, give *StartingPage* a try. It bills itself as "the world's most private search engine." It still uses Google, but it strips off all things that identify you before sending the search request to Google.

<https://startingpage.com/>

This encyclopedia is hosted by the Smithsonian Museum. You can find a whole treasure trove of information here.

<http://si.edu/Encyclopedia>

We encounter symbols all the time. Some of them we know the meaning and many of them we do not. This site (which also happens to be the first domain registered when Internet domains became available) lists over 2,500 different symbols with their meaning and origin.

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

### 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  
 1816 Bauss Ct  
 Midland, MI 48642-4023

Attn: Membership Chairman

You may also pay for membership at a regular club meeting

## Useful, useless and strange Web Sites (continued):

If you want to include some of the various special characters in a document, it is a nuisance to continually opening the Character Map to find the characters you want. This site allows you to select a string of characters, copy them to your clipboard and paste them into your document. This is particularly useful for those of you who like to do polite swearing (\*%&@?§).

<http://copypastecharacter.com/>

We sometimes have difficulty adapting to new technology. The Milwaukee Zoo has started to introduce iPads to their Orangutans. Watch as they learn this new technology.

<http://tinyurl.com/8xxvjph>

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## Tips, Tricks & Techniques (submitted by Howard Lewis)

### Switching Between Open Windows

Many of us have multiple applications open at the same time. Usually, you use the mouse to switch between these applications. However, if you are more of a keyboard-centric person, there are several shortcuts which you can use to switch between open applications.

**Alt+Esc** – This method goes back many generations in Windows. By pressing the *Alt* key and holding it down, repeated pressing of the *Esc* key will cycle through the running programs. When you find the program you wish to switch to, simply release both keys.

**Alt+Tab** – This method also dates back a long ways. By pressing the *Alt* key and pressing the *Tab* key, a bar will appear showing all of the applications that are currently running. By repeatedly pressing the *Tab* key, you will cycle through those applications. Once you have found your program, simply release both keys.

**WindowsKey+Tab** – This combination was introduced with Windows Vista and continues with Windows 7. This is frequently referred to as **Flip-3D** and acts much like the old Rolodex card systems. By pressing the *Windows Key* and *Tab* key something that looks like the old Rolodex will be displayed. Again, repeatedly pressing the *Tab* key, will cycle through the running applications. When you find the application you are looking for, simply release both keys.

### Backing Up Your Windows 7 Drivers

Drivers are those little programs which allow Windows to communicate with your various hardware devices. These devices are frequently installed by Windows or your hardware vendor when the system is built. However, if your system decides to go south and take a vacation, you may have to reinstall Windows. Since those drivers are essential to the proper performance of your computer, you really should have the proper drivers. At this point, you are frequently relegated to going on the Internet to find the appropriate drivers for your hardware. If you have backed up your drivers, you can simply reinstall them and Windows should operate properly.

In the Windows root directory (usually called *Windows*), there is a folder called *System32*. In the *System32* folder there will be two or three folders which contain the drivers and their information. They are named *DriverStore*, *drivers*, and *DrvStore*. (*DrvStore* is usually there, but not always.) Simply copy these three (or two) folders to an external media and you will then have a copy of your drivers in case you need to restore your system.

**Tips, Tricks & Techniques (continued)****A Quick Way To Hide The Ribbon In Microsoft Office**

If you would like to view more of your document, there is a simple shortcut which will allow you to hide the Ribbon in the Microsoft Office products (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Publisher, and Access). Any time you would like to hide the Ribbon, simply double-click on one of the tabs located above the ribbon. To make the Ribbon reappear, simply double-click on the tab again. Now wasn't that easy!

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Lynn Page, Crystal River Users Group, FL

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**DO YOU "YOUTUBE"?**

By Elaine Szaniszlo, Editor, Northeast Ohio PC Club, December 2011 issue, Nybbles & Bytes  
www.neopc.org, water\_colors@sbcglobal.net

I had always thought that YouTube was a site that had lots of fun videos. Well, it does, but read on!

I was on a trip recently and the fuses blew on the car power outlets. We needed to replace the fuses as our plug-in GPS would not work otherwise. Of course, everyone knows the fuse box is located under the dashboard, right? But did you know some cars have another fuse box under the hood? We found that out on youtube.com. We typed in the car make, model and year, and fuse box, and up came a very nice video showing where the fuses were in the engine compartment, how to get the cover off and showed there was a fuse puller included (a very useful tool, indeed!). Now we would never have known that.

A friend told me he was going to replace a garbage disposal. He went to YouTube. Again, there was a detailed video explaining how to do that. Other ambitious folks I know have used YouTube to get videos on repairing clothes washers, too.

I used YouTube once to get some cooking information, but never realized the wide scope of informative videos that was available. So the next time you want to solve a problem or get information on any do-it-yourself project, check out YouTube. It may make YOU happier.

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## Mac Tips

By Ernie Cox, Jr., member of the Computer Club of Green Valley, AZ  
December 2011 issue, Green Bytes, <http://ccgv.apcug.org> , Ecoxjr (at) cox.net

### Trying to Keep Up

Apple is on the move with the iPhone, making improvements every year. The new 4S has "Siri," a program using a pleasant woman's voice, which is like having an assistant on board to help make your life a little easier. She's perfect. Well, not really, not yet, but Apple is working on improving the few problems that have cropped up. Siri can find places to eat, sleep and gas-up, remember your mate's name as well as remind you to get that bread, milk or beer before going home. Added to that, Siri will write out your emails, notes and any app you can type to. All to save those fingers.

All of you who have older Apple iPhones—before the 4S—and don't have a helpful phone in your pocket, don't feel bad. You are still in the game. There are programs that can be downloaded (for free) that will do similar functions as the iPhone 4S's "Siri."



"Vlingo" is a free program that works like "Siri" for finding places, making calls, and using street maps. Vlingo integrates with Safari, Google, phones and e-mails, etc.

"Dragon" is a voice/dictation program for use with your e-mails. After speaking into your phone, this program writes out the text of what you said that can then be used in e-mail, Facebook, Twitter and SMS (Short Message Service, a text-messaging service for phone, web or mobile communication systems).



These apps are good for older iPhones starting with 3G, 3GS and 4, for iPod Touch 2, 3 and 4, and iPad 1 and 2. Have fun keeping up.

### Join the iCloud

Apple provides services with Find My iPhone and Find My Mac that are most useful if you ever misplace one of your iOS devices. All you need is an Apple ID, which is the same as your iTunes user name and password.

To enable Find My iPhone on your iOS devices (including iPad, iPod Touch), navigate to Settings > iCloud, sign in with your Apple ID, and flip the switch for Find My iPhone to ON.



iCloud

Turning on Find My Mac is easy, too. In Mac OS X Lion 10.7.2, to go System Preferences > iCloud, and check the box next to Find My Mac. You may get a notification about allowing location services on your Mac. If so, click Allow.

Now log in to <http://www.iCloud.com> with the same Apple ID, and click the Find My iPhone icon. A screen appears, displaying all of your devices that are linked to the service. Click the small GPS dot that appears on the map, and you'll see options for tracking down your device. "Play Sound or Send Message" will let you send a push notification to your device that will also play a high-pitched sound to alert you. Remote Lock lets you set a pass code on your device so that no one else will be able to unlock it and begin using it. And, if all else fails, you can perform a Remote Wipe to clear all the data on your devices. You can do the same with all compatible Macs.

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## PC Computer Evolution

By Wil Wakely, President, Seniors Computer Group, California  
November 2011 issue, Bits and Bytes, [www.SCGsd.org](http://www.SCGsd.org), wilw31 (at) gmail.com

With the sad death in October 2011 of Steve Jobs of Apple fame, it seems appropriate to review the history of the personal computer in which he was so instrumental in its evolution. In 1970 he was only 15 years old when the micro-computer, as it was then called, stirred to life. Prior to that time, mainframes and mini-computers dominated the scene, requiring large installations and huge capital expense. IBM 360's required a special air-conditioned room and cost up to \$5.5 million each. Our smart cell phones now have more computing power than they did.

The invention of the transistor at Bell Labs in 1947 and the Integrated Circuit invented in 1958, concurrently by Texas Instruments and Intel allowed miniaturization and cost savings that revolutionized future computer designs. One of the first affordable micro-computers was the Atari, essentially an arcade game machine that played PONG, a tennis simulation. It had no programming language and used a joystick for control and a TV for a display. The Commodore 64, VIC-20 and PET were the largest selling small computers in 1976. It did have a programming language and a multitude of applications. Other computer models appeared briefly on the scene: the Osborne, a "luggable" portable computer; RadioShack TRS-80, (Trash80); Heath H-89, a kit; Sinclair ZX80, a miniature inexpensive powerhouse from England; KayPro, by Andy Kay, owner of a local Solana Beach company; IMSAI, a computer that actually looked like one with 22 front panel switches and 40 blinking red lights.

Steve Jobs and his friend, Steve Wozniak, were computer club buddies and got together in 1976 to design the Apple I. During a visit to PARC (Palo Alto Research Center, a Xerox company) Jobs saw their development of the GUI (Graphical User Interface that we now call Windows) and the mouse that controlled the cursor. He immediately realized that it was a great idea. No keyboard required! He borrowed (!) the idea and implemented it in the Apple II. Later, Microsoft borrowed (copied?) the Apple GUI for their Windows and, not surprisingly, legal actions became rampant among the three.

In 1979 a killer application called VisiCalc came on the scene. It was a rudimentary spreadsheet that was first incorporated in the Apple II. Now a personal computer could actually do some work as opposed to just playing games. VisiCalc went on to inspire Lotus 1-2-3 and Excel which are much more powerful spreadsheet programs. WordStar, a word processing (WP) program, also appeared in 1979.

Several WP programs already existed, but WordStar quickly dominated the field. Typewriters became instantly obsolete.

Also about that time, an IBM manager in the Boca Raton, FL, facility developed the prototype IBMPC. It was a tough sell to upper management because of the fear of it cannibalizing the mainframe business, but he persevered and the IBM-PC was born. However, it had no operating system (OS).

Rather than create a new one, they sought out Gary Kildall, the owner of Digital Research Inc. (DRI) in Pacific Grove, CA. He had developed CP/M which at that time was a widely used operating system for small computers. When IBM personnel flew to the West Coast for their appointment with Kildall, they were told he was off flying his airplane. He was obviously not impressed with IBM. Justifiably miffed, IBM approached Bill Gates at Microsoft for an OS.

Gates and his partner, Paul Allen, had been together since 1975 writing the BASIC programming language. Bill quickly agreed to provide an OS to IBM. He called a local friend, also a programmer, who had developed QDOS (Quick & Dirty Operating System) based upon DRI's CP/M OS. After they agreed to minimal financial terms, Gates modified it slightly for IBM and named it MS-DOS (Microsoft Disk

*(Continued on page 7)*

## PC Computer Evolution *(Continued from page 6)*

Operating System). IBM further cleaned out 300 bugs and called it PC-DOS, with Gates retaining all the rights. Brilliant negotiation! At the time, computers were sold without the OS, which had to be purchased separately. So in 1981 IBM launched the IBM-PC followed by 11 upgrade models. The XT model had the first internal hard drive.

Apple and Microsoft continue to fight for market share with supporters who are strongly opinionated lined up on each side. Apple has kept both the hardware and software proprietary, whereas PC is "Open Source," so third party suppliers can participate, increasing competition which ultimately reduces cost and increases availability of components. Also, because of Open Source, many more software applications are available for the IBM-PC than the Apple.

A second battle over the CPU (Central Processing Unit), the brains of the computer, pits Intel against AMD and Motorola. Again, competition favors the customer with perhaps Intel having a slim lead in performance, but not price.

Video displays have evolved from TVs to CRTs (cathode ray tubes), offered in either white, green or orange characters, to high resolution LCDs (Liquid Crystal Displays aka Flat Screens). OLED displays (Organic Light Emitting Diodes) are on the horizon with the promise of lower cost and better features.

Internal memory in early computers cost \$125 for 8KB. Now, 4GB, which is 500,000 times larger, only costs a fraction of that. Storage memory has evolved from punched paper tape to magnetic tape to floppy disks in sizes of 8", 5" and 3.5". Now hard disk drives, flash drives, CD/DVD/BlueRay burners, and Internet Cloud sites offer huge storage capability at minimal cost.

So what is next? Probably a major breakthrough will occur that we can neither predict nor even envision. There will be many exciting PC developments ahead, so stay tuned.

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## **Windows Live SkyDrive: An Office in the Cloud**

By Nancy DeMarte, a member of the Sarasota PCUG, Florida

December 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor, [www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org), [ndemarte \(at\) Verizon.net](mailto:ndemarte@verizon.net)

A quiet, steady evolution is taking place in the data storage world. Soon CD's and external hard drives may be replaced by storage on the Internet, or, as we say, the "cloud." In this era of mobile devices like smart phones, laptops, and tablets, it is natural for us to want to have access to the files and photos on our base computer when we are in some remote location. SkyDrive is Microsoft's password-protected, free online storage area, complete with abbreviated versions of popular Microsoft Office programs for editing the stored files. It is also equipped for sharing files with others and is a convenient way to transfer files from an old computer to a new one. Microsoft Office users should get to know Windows Live SkyDrive as a solid option for online backup.

Online storage has been around for awhile, primarily purchased by businesses as a backup for large amounts of data. Carbonite, for example, is a well-respected online storage company popular with businesses which also offers a package for home clients. The home client pays an annual fee of about \$60 per computer to upload user-created files to a secure spot. Free online storage is not as common, but Google and Microsoft are competing for the title of most popular free cloud storage. I have used Microsoft's SkyDrive for a couple of years and have found it to be a user friendly, flexible service with many good features and being updated all the time.

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Windows Live SkyDrive: An Office in the Cloud *(Continued from page 7)*

## Windows Live

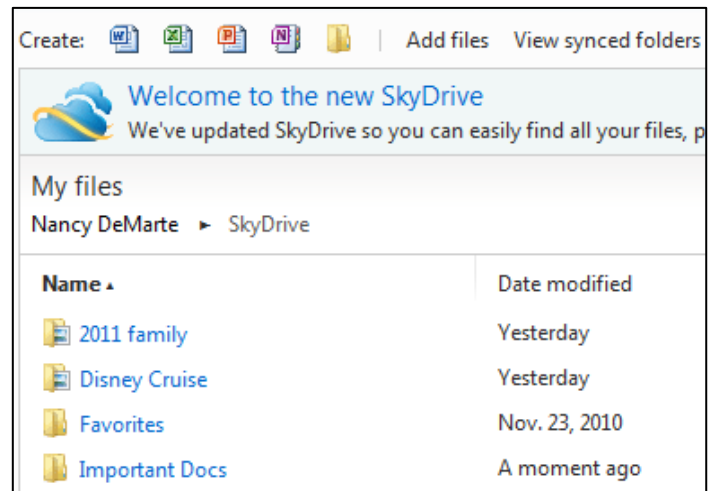
Before we explore how SkyDrive works, let's take a minute to review the concept of "Windows Live," of which SkyDrive is a part. Microsoft has been reworking the "Live" idea since 2005. It is a group of online services and software downloads which complement Microsoft's operating systems. When Windows 7 was introduced, several applications which had been part of earlier Windows versions were removed, among them Windows Mail and Photo Gallery. Instead, Microsoft offered a suite of programs and services called Microsoft Live Essentials and made it available for free downloads, as long as the person joined the Live community with a username and password. (I have belonged for years and have not received spam as a result.) Users can choose the programs they want from a long list. Many of these are online services, such as SkyDrive and Hotmail. Others are downloadable programs, such as Windows Live Mail and Movie Maker. All are free. Microsoft has announced recently that Windows 8 will have the Live Essentials package included with the system.

## SkyDrive: Free Storage

SkyDrive lets a Microsoft Office user add Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations, OneNote documents, and photos to a password-protected place on the Internet at skydrive.live.com. You can add a single file up to 100MB in size and can store a total of 25GB at no charge. These limits were recently raised, and the prediction is that storage space on SkyDrive may be unlimited very soon. Isn't competition great?

To add files to SkyDrive, you must first create a free Live account, then log on to SkyDrive and create folders to hold your files. You then select the files, including photos, from your computer and upload copies of them into these folders using an easy-to-follow wizard on the SkyDrive home page. You can even upload a whole folder at once as a local zip drive. Next you set permissions for each folder using a simple slider and folksy categories: Everyone (public), People I selected, People with a link, or Just me.

Once files are in SkyDrive, they can be deleted, organized, and renamed. Plus, they can be edited with the Office web apps, mini-versions of Office programs located on the SkyDrive home page, using any version of Office back to 2003. If you have Office 2010, you can open a file that you have stored in SkyDrive in the appropriate web app, and then click the "Open in ..." button to open it with your full version of program on your computer. If you have an earlier version of Office, you can download a plug-in program from Microsoft that allows you to open a file with your full program. I tried this on my laptop with Word 2007, however, and found it cumbersome. I guess they want us to buy Office 2010. As a workaround, you can always download a file from SkyDrive to your computer for full editing capabilities.



## Sharing Files

If you want to share a file, whether an Office file for a photo, on SkyDrive with someone, you can either send him a link or set the permission so he can view and/or edit it. I experimented by sharing a Word 2007 document with a friend who is not a member of Windows Live. In SkyDrive, I highlighted the file I wanted to send. From the Sharing menu, I clicked 'Send a Link'. An email message opened ready to address. It contained a link to the file with a spot for me to type a message. My friend received the message with no problem and merely clicked the link to go directly to the folder on SkyDrive. She now has permission to view documents in that folder.

*(Continued on page 9)*



## Windows Live SkyDrive: An Office in the Cloud *(Continued from page 8)*

Currently, the only Office web app that allows for shared editing is Excel. This involves editing a spreadsheet in SkyDrive with selected people. Names of those working on the file at the same time show up in the toolbar.

SkyDrive is greatly improved from its predecessor, Windows Live Workspace. I would expect it to get even better as the competition heats up with its rival Google. The reviews show that although Google made a huge push a couple of years ago, with its array of services like Google Apps and Google Calendar, Microsoft is catching up. Its latest version of SkyDrive, plus two new related synchronization services, Live Sync and Live Mesh, are a good start. Microsoft now offers 25 GB of free storage compared with Google's 1 GB (although there is the option to purchase more). If you are a Microsoft Office fan, then you can't go wrong by giving SkyDrive a try.

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## Word 2010 Screen Shots and Screen Clipping

By Lynn Page, Newsletter Editor/Webmaster, Crystal River Users Group, FL  
*December 2011 issue, CRUG newsletter, [www.crug.com](http://www.crug.com), [editor@crug.com](mailto:editor@crug.com)*

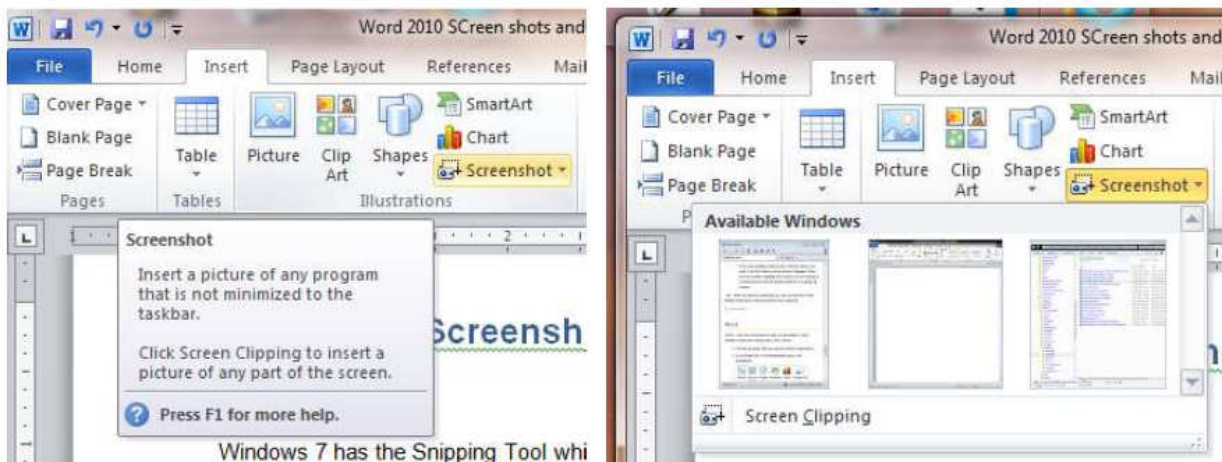
Windows 7 has the Snipping Tool which is handy to capture all or part of the visible screen. Use it to capture a screen shot of any object on your screen, and then annotate, save, or share the image. These snips are great for illustrating what you're talking about. I use them all of the time in writing articles or class documents.

Office 2010 brings the ability to make screenshots or snips directly into Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, and Word. Take a picture of all or part of the open windows. Clicking the Screenshot button lets you select and insert an entire program window or use the Screen Clipping tool to select part of the window. The windows must be open and not minimized to the taskbar to be captured.

Both of Windows Snipping Tool and Office 2010's Screen Shots and Screen Clipping are valuable when trying to explain something seen on the computer screen.

### Capture a Screenshot within Word

The Screenshot tool is located in the Illustrations group on the Insert tab. Clicking the Screenshot icon opens a drop down preview with thumbnails of open windows that are 'behind' the Word document. Unfortunately you cannot capture from the current Word document and it is not among the thumbnails. Mousing over a thumbnail, opens a tooltip with the program name and document title. Select from the available screenshots to add a shot of the entire window to the document. The screenshot of the selected window will be automatically sized to the width of the document and pasted at the location of the insertion point.



*Continued on page 10)*

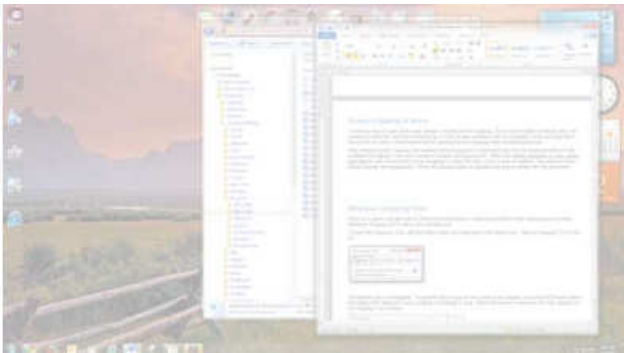
## Word 2010 Screen Shots and Screen Clipping *(Continued from page 9)*

### Screen Clipping in Word

To insert a clip of a part of an open window, choose Screen Clipping. If you have multiple windows open, the window to make the clip from needs to be in front of other windows with the exception of the working Word document. So click on that window before clicking Screen Clipping in the working document.

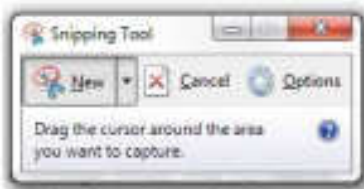


After clicking Screen Clipping, the working Word document is minimized and only the windows behind it are available for clipping. The entire screen is opaque and greyed out. The pointer becomes a cross. With it press and hold the left mouse button while dragging to select the area of the screen to capture. The selection then shows through the opaqueness. When the mouse button is released the snip is pasted into the document.



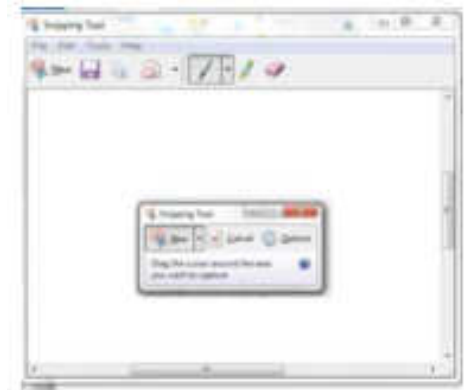
### Windows Snipping Tool

Since you cannot use the built in Office Screenshot tool to make screenshots of the working document the



Windows Snipping tool is still a very valuable tool. To open the Snipping Tool, click the Start button and type snip in the search box. Click on Snipping Tool in the list. The default snip is rectangular. So position the mouse at one corner to be snipped, press the left mouse button and

drag to the diagonal corner creating a rectangle to snip. When the mouse is released, the snip appears in the Snipping Tool window. To discard the current snip and create a new one click the New 'Scissors' button.

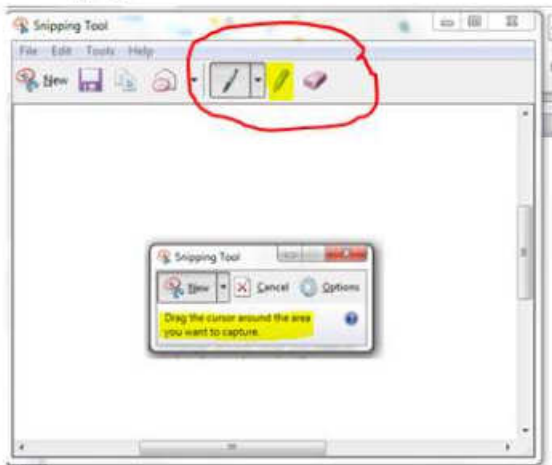


### Annotating a Snip

It may be useful to highlight certain elements in the screen shot. With the Snipping tool you can draw a freehand circle, arrow or even write with the pen tool. Just click and drag on the screenshot. The standard pen is blue but I selected red and drew out a circle around the pen, highlighter and eraser tools. The Snipping Tool highlighter is yellow and can be used like a regular highlighter to bring attention to certain areas. The Eraser erases pen and highlighter markings but does not modify the original snip.

*(Continued on page 11)*

Word 2010 Screen Shots and Screen Clipping *(Continued from page 10)*



**Types of Snips**

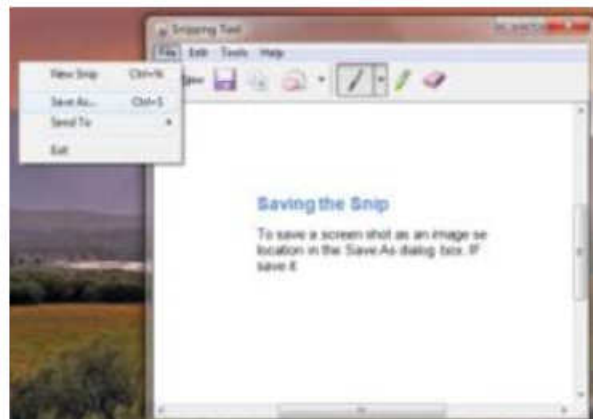
The default snip is Rectangular but Free-form, Window and Full-screen snips are available. To choose which snip to use, click the down arrow by the New button. To use the Free-form Snip draw a shape around an object on the screen with the scissors icon. When using the Window Snip to select a whole window, like an application window or dialog box, click in it with the hand icon. The Full-screen Snip automatically captures the entire screen.



Once a screen shot has been taken using the Snipping Tool, it's on the clipboard. So you can paste it straight into a Microsoft Word document or your Outlook email. The annotations added to the screen shot are included on the clipboard.

**Saving the Snip**

To save a screen shot as an image, select Save As in the File drop down menu. Then in the Save As dialog box type in a name for the image and specify a location for it to be saved. If you do not save the clip and close Snipping tool you will be prompted to save it. The File drop down menu also contains Send To. Click it to open your default email application and send the snip.



## Stellarium

By Cal Esneault, President of the Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA and leader of many Open Source Workshops & SIGs, December 2011 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News  
<http://cccclinuxsig.pbwiki.com>, [www.clickers.org](http://www.clickers.org), [ccnewsletter \(at\) cox.net](mailto:ccnewsletter@cox.net)

In my youth, I would take a copy of my uncle's *Star and Telescope* magazine and go to the center section to use the two-page star map guide. Twisting and turning the map to match my view, the many constellations and other night time wonders of the universe could be identified. Today, we can use vastly superior computerized versions to guide us through the night sky. One excellent program is *Stellarium*, an open-source program available for *Windows*, *Mac OS X*, *Linux*, and *BSD* operating systems. Although there are more sophisticated programs designed for professional and advanced amateur stargazers, *Stellarium* fits in the "fun" group by providing simple but detailed functions in a user friendly manner. The essential concept is to get an annotated view of a portion of the sky, adjusted for location and desired viewing time, which can be adjusted horizontally and vertically to match your viewing perspective.



Initial use can be confusing. It starts up in full screen mode with no menu items visible. Move your mouse to the left or bottom border to activate the command tool bars (see below). Those items on the bottom turn on the various viewing items (constellation names, constellation connectors, planet id's, horizon types, etc.). Those items on the left set up the system controls (location, time, item luminosity to display, etc.).



The default location is Paris, France. Go to the "Location window" icon to choose your city from a dropdown list (or input latitude and longitude). Next, go to the "Date/time window" to set your local time. By using up/down arrow controls you can see what the sky will look like at any future or past time (for example, what can I see if I go out tonight at 10:00 PM?).

Below is a screenshot of a night time view. I have added an azimuthal grid and constellation connectors. If



you have a telescope with an equatorial mount, you can also display an equatorial grid. Clicking on any object will display key information (apparent magnitude, hour angle and declination, and azimuthal information updated for passage of time). Using the "ocular" view, you can see any listed object as viewed by a telescope of approximately 80x magnification.

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Stellarium (*Continued from page 12*)

The default system includes 600,000 stars along with a full Messier catalog of Nebulae. The constellations of 10 different cultures are included. Various upgrade modules, plug-ins, and scripts exist (for example, you can expand to view over 200 million stars). Depending upon your needs, you can change the projected view of the sky – stereoscopic, fish-eye, cylindrical, etc. There is a text-entry search window quickly locate objects.

Download a free copy at [stellarium.org](http://stellarium.org) (Linux users, find with your package manager). Smartphone versions are available for iOS (Android users, use Google Sky instead).

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## **This and That or Things that May Interest You**

By Lynn Page, Editor / Webmaster, Crystal River Users Group, FL  
September issue of the CRUG newsletter, [www.crug.com](http://www.crug.com), editor (at) crug.com

### ***Protect Your Word Files***

In Word 2007 click the Office button and select Prepare and Encrypt Document. Enter and verify a password in the dialog box. In Word 2010 select Info on the File tab. Click Protect Document and then Encrypt with Password. Enter and confirm the password. Be sure to remember any passwords you use.

### ***Windows 7***

#### **Optimize Your Display**

Windows 7 has tools for optimizing an LCD. Click the Start button, type display in the search field and press Enter.

Click the Calibrate Color link to start a wizard that helps adjust gamma, brightness, and contrast for the LCD.

The Display options also contain Adjust ClearType Text. This wizard helps adjust the font smoothing effects and text readability on the screen.

#### **Calculator**

Windows 7 calculator is deceptively powerful. It looks a simple calculator, but look at the View drop down menu to see Scientific, Statistics and Programmer views. It even has different unit conversions, date calculations, and spreadsheet-type templates for various tasks. So the new Calculator can perform simple calculations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division but also offers the advanced capabilities of a programming, scientific, and statistical calculator.

#### **Magnifier**

Magnifier enlarges and is part of the Ease of Access Center. To open, click Start, and then type Magnifier in the Search box. It has three magnifying modes. Full-screen mode magnifies the entire screen. But you might not be able to see the entire screen at one time. With Lens mode the area around the mouse pointer is magnified. Moving the mouse moves the area of the screen that's magnified. In Docked mode a portion of the screen is magnified and the rest of the desktop unchanged. You can define a scale factor and docking position.

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