



Midland Michigan

BITS AND BYTES

August 2014

<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:

August 27, 2014

This month's topic:

Club Picnic - see President Piper's
Ponderings for details.

What you missed!

June meeting - discussion of browsers

Program Coordinators

Howard Lewis lewis3ha@chartermi.net

Bill Tower tower.w@gmail.com

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

President Piper's Ponderings



August is the Club picnic, same place,
same time (7:00 pm). Bring a dish to
pass and the Club will provide subs,
pop and table service.

As in the past, we will not have a formal
meeting in August. That should give us
plenty of time for Q. & A. as well as time for Show & Tell
about all the new hardware and software you have
acquired over the summer.

The Club will continue to staff the Computer Lab four
days each month. Here is your chance to volunteer to
help others who are new to the computer world. It also is
a good time to show up and get your own questions
answered in more detail.

In the past I have tried to promote August as "clean out
your computer junk" month. Bring your old or unneeded
stuff to give away.

Think about what topics you would like for the Club to
discuss in the coming year. I have hinted that we may
continue on from last June's browser topic to discuss the
various search engines. Windows 8 deserves more time
in future Club meetings. I would think that another
meeting on tablets is also probably in order.

My summer computer topic might be titled, How to
convert a perfectly good laptop into a door stop. Come
and hear how I managed to do this, and what success I
have or have not had in breathing new life into my
mistake.

Bring a friend, bring a question but mostly bring yourself
to help us kick off a new season. See you on August 27.

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

<https://www.yahoo.com/tech/why-is-my-gadget-charging-very-slowly-or-not-at-all-92050885969.html>

Problems charging your tablet or cell phone, check out this article from Wired Magazine.

http://www.wired.com/2014/06/nsa-bug-iphone/?mbid=synd_yahootech

Can hackers use your phone's microphone to eavesdrop on your non-phone conversation, even if the phone is turned off?

http://www.twincities.com/ci_25037984/dont-panic-but-that-public-wi-fi-is?source=pkg

In some cities, Comcast uses customer's home modems to set up public wi-fi hot-spots.

<http://tinyurl.com/l5vn4ou>

With the help of AARP's Technology Education Center. You'll find useful how-to videos, tips, and guides that help you keep up with technology.

<http://tinyurl.com/chy3fbj>

If you are missing the snow (ha, ha), try going to New Zealand about now.

Board Meeting

First Thursday of the month
 7:00 PM

Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church,
 5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland MI

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

Tips, Tricks & Techniques (submitted by Carol Picard)**Change/remove file associations in Windows 8**

Windows associates file extensions with programs, so a file with a specific extension will automatically open in a specific program, for example, .xlsx files open in Microsoft Excel.

A list of file extensions and the Current Default program for the extension can be found in "Control Panel - Programs - Default Programs - Associate a file type or protocol with a specific program". In some cases the Current Default for an extension is "Unknown application" or "Not selected".

If a file extension is incorrectly associated with a program, the action can be changed by associating the extension with the correct program, either by changing the program through Control Panel or completing the following steps:

For example, if .txt extension has become associated with Excel:

- right click on any file with a .txt extension
- on pop-out menu, scroll to *Open with...*
- on second pop-out menu, click *Choose default program...*
- make sure there is a checkmark in the square to the left of *Use this app for all .xxx files*
Where .xxx is the extension the association is being changed for
- Locate and click the program you want to set as default, in this case Notepad.
 - * make sure to click the correct program because there is no confirmation step, the change happens as soon as you click to select the program
- default action is reset and the file will open in the newly set default program

However, if a file extension is incorrectly associated with a program and you don't want it associated with any program, there is no option to delete the extension from Control Panel or to reset it to "Unknown application". For example, if you tried opening a file with a .tmp extension in Excel and didn't uncheck the box to the left of *Use this app for all .tmp files*, all .tmp files will be associated with (and try to open in) Excel. A registry edit can apparently be used to delete the extension, but here is a solution that doesn't require editing the registry:

- create an empty file and save it anywhere (a blank Notepad document on the desktop is a good choice)
- rename the file just created with an extension not normally used, e.g., something.orange
- right click on any file with the extension whose association you want to remove, in this case a file with a .tmp extension
- click *Properties*
- click *Change...* button after "Opens with:"
- click *More Options*
- scroll to bottom of list and click *Look for another app on this PC*
- in Open with... window, after File Name: click triangle after "Programs (*.exe...)" and set it to *All Files (*.*)*
- browse to Desktop and click the file you created: something.orange
- click Open
- click OK
- on the Desktop, delete the file: something.orange
- in Control Panel, the extension (in this example .tmp) should now show "Unknown application" under Current Default column.

These instructions can also be used with Windows 7 but there are some differences in how the options appear.

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Set browsers to not display images (PC and Android)

Carol Picard, Webmaster, Newsletter Editor, Midland Computer Club, Midland MI

When low-speed internet connections were the norm, turning off images in web browsers was often done so pages would load faster. With high-speed connections more common, there may not be as much concern about images in web pages but there still might be times when you don't want to have the images display.

The following changes take place immediately, it isn't necessary to close and re-launch the browser. New pages will open with no images. Pages that were already open will still display images, to remove images, refresh the pages.

PC**Firefox**

in address bar, type: about:config

press: Enter

search for: permissions

double click: permissions.default.image

type desired value in Enter Integer Value window:

1 -- always load the images

2 -- never load the images

3 -- allow only images from the same site to load and block third-party-images

click OK

<https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/questions/981640>

Google Chrome

click Menu icon (upper right corner of Toolbar)

click Settings

scroll to bottom and click "Show advanced Settings"

under Privacy, click "Content Settings..."

under Images, chose one of the following options:

- disable all images – click in circle to left of "Do not show any images"

- disable some images: keep the default option set to "Show all images", click on "Manage exceptions..." and add domains/subdomains that should be blocked

- disable all images, with some exceptions: click in circle to left of "Do not show any images", click on "Manage exceptions..." and add domains/subdomains that should be allowed

click Done

<https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20111125034126AAVvk8e>

Internet Explorer

click Tools icon (gear icon at top-right corner of window)

click "Internet Options"

click Advanced tab located at top of resulting dialog box

scroll through list of options to Multimedia section

click to remove checkmark from box to left of Show pictures

click "OK" to confirm change

http://www.ehow.com/how_8166038_turn-off-images-internet-explorer.html

ANDROID

Browser (stock browser - globe icon - not on all tablets)

tap Menu button (3 small vertical squares in upper right)

tap Settings

tap Bandwidth management

tap to uncheck box for Load images

Dolphin

tap Dolphin icon

tap gear icon (Settings)

tap Web content

tap Load images

tap in circle to set: Always off or Show in WIFI

Firefox

In address bar, type: about:config

press Enter

search for: permissions

single tap: permissions.default.image

tap up pointing arrow to change setting:

- 2 (never load images)

- 3 (allow only images from the same site to load and block third-party-images)

to re-display images:

tap Reset

or

tap down pointing arrow to change setting: 1 (always load images)

Google Chrome

have not found option in current Android version

Interesting Internet Finds – January 2014

Steve Costello, President/Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL
Editor (at) brcs.org, <http://ctublog.sefcug.com/>

In the course of going through the more than 200 RSS feeds, I often run across things that I think might be of interest to other user group members. The following are some items I found interesting during the month of January 2014.

Hashtags Today Are Everywhere – Learn How to Use Them to Get Results

<http://inspiretothrive.com/2014/01/hashtags-today/>

Hashtags are not only for Twitter, this post shows other social media that use them, and how to use them effectively there.

How to Move Apps to SD Card on Your Android Device

<http://www.maketecheasier.com/move-apps-to-sd-card-android/>

This question was asked at a SIG (Special Interest Group) earlier, but no one had an Android device with an SD card, so could not answer the question. This post refers to an app to do that.

Google Plus Login, Sign Up and Sign In Security Tips

<http://www.thewindowsclub.com/google-plus-login-sign-up>

Thinking of signing up for Google Plus? If so, and I think you really should check it out, read this post from the Windows Club for how to do it.

You can find me on Google Plus at: <https://plus.google.com/111470516433780358624/>

How to Read a Kindle Book on a Computer

<http://www.wonderoftech.com/how-to-read-a-kindle-book-on-a-computer/>

This post explains how to read Kindle books without a Kindle device, or smartphone, by reading it on your computer via two different methods.

Remove Personal Information from Your Digital Photos

<http://www.ghacks.net/2014/01/27/remove-personal-information-digital-photos/>

Concerned about personal information showing on your online photos? If so, check out this post for how to remove the information before posting with Windows Explorer.

If External Hard Drives Can Fail, Should I Bother With One?

<http://askleo.com/if-external-hard-drives-can-fail-should-i-bother-with-one/>

Leo answers with a definitive YES, and explains why.

Most Fridays, more interesting finds will be posted on the Computers, Technology, and User Groups Blog: <http://ctublog.sefcug.com/tag/interesting-internet-finds/>

The posts are under Creative Commons licensing.

Multitasking: the Big Myth

By Diane Fahlbusch, President, ICON PC User Group (ICONPCUG), Long Island, NY
May 2014 issue, ICONPCUG Graphic, editor (at) iconpcug.org

Multitasking became the highly touted skill to possess back at the start of the millennium. The business world thought that more work could be accomplished with the same amount of people with this method. However, do we really all mean the same thing when we say it? Can one learn how to multitask? And, the most important question, does multitasking make one more productive? Well these questions have been the focus of numerous studies worldwide spanning over a decade. They have yielded some interesting results.

Multitasking is actually defined as performing more than one task simultaneously. An example of this is holding on a conversation while typing an email to a business associate. According to Earl Miller, a professor of neuroscience at MIT, we just cannot focus on more than one thing at a time. However, many people use the same expression to describe performing one task at a time, and then switching to another one quickly. Working in one program on your computer, and then switching to a different program in another open window is a common example. This is actually called “task switching”, but it is often lumped under the category of multitasking.

Another statement is that one must “learn to multitask”. This is true to a certain extent – all activities are learned. But “learning to multitask” is the wrong expression. What it really means is learning tasks so well that you do not need to concentrate to perform them properly. Think back to when you were four or five years old and just learning how to tie your shoelaces. You needed to concentrate and could not focus on anything else. But now you probably could NOT tie your shoelaces if you ACTULLY concentrated on doing it. However, when at least one task requires you to concentrate to accomplish it, multitasking is not necessarily happening. One is typically not doing either task well. As an example, most people listen to the radio while driving. But can you actually name the songs that were played, or remember the words? (Even when not attempting to multitask, most people do not pay attention to the lyrics. Think back to when the President Ronald Reagan quoted “Born in the USA” in a patriotic speech, and missed that it was NOT a patriotic song.) The more prevalent example is driving and talking on the cell phone. In spite of the laws that have been passed, people still do it.

But can one improve one’s multitasking ability? “According to David Strayer, director of the applied cognition lab at the University of Utah, who studies multitasking in the fertile realm of distracted driving, ‘ninety-eight percent of people can’t multitask—they don’t do either task as well.’ ... And he found that, sure enough, the very structure of the supertasker brain looks different than those of 98 percent of us. ‘These brain regions that differentiate supertaskers from the rest of the population are the same regions that are most different between humans and nonhuman primates,’ says Strayer. In other words, the brains of supertaskers are just that much further away from those of apes, ‘the leading edge of evolution,’ says Strayer. Specifically: ‘Certain parts of the frontal cortex are recruited in an interesting way,’ says Strayer. In fact, these areas show less activity when multitasking than do the same areas in normal, human, mammalian, non-alien-overlord brains like mine. And it’s distinct—you either efficiently recruit this region or you don’t. You’re either a supertasker or you’re not.”¹

So much for learning to multitask! So what about giving task switching a try? Here are some fascinating facts.

"In the brain, multitasking is managed by what are known as mental executive functions. These executive functions control and manage other cognitive processes and determine how, when and in what order certain tasks are performed. According to researchers Meyer, Evans and Rubinstein, there are two stages to the executive control process. The first stage is known as 'goal shifting'" (deciding to do one thing instead of another) and the second is known as 'role activation' (changing from the rules for the previous task to rules for the new task).

Switching between these may only add a time cost of just a few tenths of a second, but this can start to add up when people begin switching back and forth repeatedly. This might not be that big of a deal in some cases, such as when you are folding laundry and watching television at the same time. However, if you are in a situation where safety or productivity are important, such as when you are driving a car in heavy traffic, even small amounts of time can prove critical."³

This gives a greater perspective about what one is actually doing. But what about enhancing the ability to task switch? Switching between rote tasks is relatively simple, but when the tasks become more complicated, the results are quite interesting. This finding is pretty much a no-brainer: "Recent research also proves that as we get older the brain is less able to focus on more than one task at a time, and takes longer to switch between tasks."² According to the Harvard Business Review from a study conducted by the Institute of Psychiatry, trying to focus on more than one task DECREASES your productivity by 40%, and lowers your IQ 10 points. The study also found that excessive use of technology also reduced workers' intelligence. Other studies have shown that multitasking/taskswitching reduces one's mental abilities TWO TIMES the effect of smoking marijuana, or the equivalent of losing a full night's sleep. It also increases one's stress. And of course the all famous talking on the cellphone while driving, even with a hands free device, decreases reaction time the equivalent of a blood alcohol level of .08%. As a side note, having a conversation with a passenger is only slightly less distracting, as per insurance industry statistics.

But this finding is actually shocking. "In a 2009 study, Stanford researcher Clifford Nass challenged 262 college students to complete experiments that involved switching among tasks, filtering irrelevant information, and using working memory. Nass and his colleagues expected that frequent multitaskers would outperform nonmultitaskers on at least some of these activities. They found the opposite: Chronic multitaskers were abysmal at all three tasks. The scariest part: Only one of the experiments actually involved multitasking, signaling to Nass that even when they focus on a single activity, frequent multitaskers use their brains less effectively."⁴

My mother always said, "Do one thing at a time. ...Turn the television/radio off and do your homework." She was so right, and ahead of her time. So this adds up to some very harsh realities. Multitasking is a "hardwired" ability for 2% of the population, but a giant myth for 98% of the population. Additionally, tasks requiring the same cognitive ability can NOT be performed simultaneously, such as watching a movie and responding to emails. (Both require visual and linguistic cognition.) Most people are actually task switching. This is fine when the activities are simple tasks that are well learned and do NOT require the same cognitive ability. The more one attempts to task shift, the worse one gets, not to mention damaging to overall mental functioning, perhaps permanently. One final conclusion from multiple studies is that the people who insist that they can multitask are the WORST at it. Does this sound like anyone you know?

¹ "This is Your Brain on Multitasking" by Garth Sundem, February 24, 2012, www.psychologytoday.com

² "Think You're Multitasking? Think Again", by Jon Hamilton, October 2, 2008, www.npr.org

³ "The Cognitive Costs of Multitasking", by Kendra Cherry, March 4, 2014, <http://psychology.about.com/od/cognitivepsychology/a/costs-of-multitasking.htm>

⁴ "Don't Multitask: Your Brain Will Thank you", by Issie Lapowsky, April 17, 2013, <http://business.time.com/2013/04/17/dont-multitask-your-brain-will-thank-you/>

RAMBLINGS – March 2014

By Jack Fischer, Director/Communications, The Computer Club, Inc., Florida
March 2014 issue, The Journal
www.sccccomputerclub.org/ - [jafischer \(at\) juno.com](mailto:jafischer@juno.com)

My nomination for the “Invention of the Century” is Caller ID. I know of nothing as empowering as looking at that TV or device-screen and deciding whether to answer the phone, or just let it ring!

It must be frustrating to those trying to sell me an Air Conditioner or a Security Alarm or whatever, but it certainly feels good from my side. I figure if it is someone who really needs, or wants, to get in touch with me, they will leave a message on my answering machine. If they merely hang up, it suggests that I don't need whatever it is they are offering.

Telephones have certainly changed. Remember the black, Western Electric instrument, where the phone company charged extra if we had more than one.

Today, it seems that everyone, from the President's encrypted Blackberry to my neighbor who hangs one on a string around his neck, has one of those that communicates, takes pictures, plays music and apparently protects us from Global Warming.

Not me, of course. I have an old rudimentary one that I keep in the car to call AAA when I run out of gas, or from the cellphone lot when meeting someone at the airport.

Happy Computing, Jack

The Tip Corner – January 2014

Bill Sheff, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, Pennsylvania
January 2014 issue, The LVCG Journal
www.lvcbg.org, [nsheff \(at\) aol.com](mailto:nsheff@aol.com)

Let's start off by wishing you and your computers a healthy and happy New Year.

Keep Updates Current

Make sure you install the latest updates for Windows (or whatever your operating system you use), your programs and applications and device drivers. This can ensure a smoother experience. Windows allows you to receive updates automatically. Just go to the Control Panel and click on Windows Updates. You can set up updates to be downloaded whenever it is most convenient to you. And since most of their updates are usually related to security, let Windows take care of it for you. Some programs will advise when there is an update or a new version. As a precaution, do not click on the recommended method, but use the custom button instead. Now-a-days they are adding tool bars and other programs that you might not want. By using the custom update you have the ability to unselect or decline these add-ons. In many cases drivers do get updated, but go into your device manager and check on the date of the drivers. In some cases you can search for updates from the vendors or Microsoft. If a driver does not seem to be working like you feel it should, you can delete or uninstall the driver, close your machine and restart it, and the device manager will reinstall the driver.

Backup

If you do not usually back up your system now would be a good time to do it. You can never go wrong with backing up; this is something you should do often even when you are not making major changes to your computer. Windows has made it very easy to backup your computer. The built in system imaging and backup and restore center makes it convenient to back up the operating system and all your critical data. However there are a few commercial and free backup systems available for you. You want to

make a complete image of your hard drive about once a month (or more frequently if you do have critical information). Most of these systems create a compressed version of the hard drive as a bit to bit copy. But try and get a program that allows you to a) look at the backup as in Windows explorer, and b) get into the backup and withdraw and expand a file. Very helpful. Of course the best place to put a backup is on an external drive – not the same drive as your data. Hard drives can crash making it impossible to restore any data.

Filing

So whats next? Try not to keep putting files into your document or download folder. Set up a system of folders – much like a filing cabinet. Within each major folder you can have multiple sub-folders, and within them sub-sub-folders. You can set them up by subject and then by date and then by further breakdown. I use this a lot and every year I set up a new year within many of my folders. But this is just one idea of many possible methods. Think it through and come up with something that fits what you do.

A Fun Project: How to make Photos Look like Pencil Drawings

As I am wont to do, I search the net looking for tips and help articles. I came across a site: “HowToGeek.com” and there are lots of interesting things hidden there. One that I liked was How to Make a Photo Look Like a Pencil Drawing. There is a lengthy tutorial with lots of pictures that take you step by step into this fascinating procedure. There are also stand alone programs that do the same thing, such as: Photo Funia and \$1.99 apps like My sketch HD and Pic Sketch for iPhones. Go read the tutorial and see if you want to play at being an “artist.”

What Happens If I Keep Using Windows XP?

Microsoft support for Windows XP goes away on April 8, 2014. Now XP isn't going to suddenly stop working, but without official Microsoft support, there will be no new security updates or bug fixes for Windows XP systems. Some third-party security software will continue to defend against known bugs, but without Microsoft support, they will not guarantee protection against new threats. Symantec, the company behind Norton Security said, “After the official End of Support date from Microsoft goes into effect, Symantec Support may not be able to provide full threat resolution on XP systems due to a lack of Microsoft security patches. It has always been Symantec's stance that proper network and workstation security begins at having the most recent security patches from the OS Vendor. Depending on the nature of the threats involved, Windows XP may be susceptible to viruses and risks that more recent iterations of Windows are immune to.”

McAfee made a similar statement. “If a McAfee product requires Microsoft to provide a fix and Microsoft does not provide the fix, then McAfee cannot support the product any longer.”

Without current security support, XP systems will be prime targets for people with malicious intent. They will be looking for ways to get into your system and steal your data. More so than usual. Between July 2012 and July 2013, Windows XP was an affected product in 45 Microsoft security updates. Without official support from Microsoft, those issues will not be addressed. With XP being completely vulnerable, you can expect to see a lot more threats than that in a year after April 2014.

Time to consider biting the bullet and get a new system. But the good news is With Window's 8.1 out there you can be assured that your operating system will be as good as it can be.

Making a hyperlink in Gmail

Typing in a web site in Gmail does not indicate a “hyperlink” or any indication that it would be an active link. It was necessary to go down to the bottom of the email toolbar, highlight the address, and then click on the link button so it showed up as working. Okay. But there is an easier way. Do nothing! When you are typing the link, it will not show up as an active link. However, as soon as you send it (or preview it!), you will see that it is a working link.

Print Out Part of A PDF Document

In the old days if you were reading a magazine and wanted part of an article, you simply scanned it into your computer, saved it in a word document, edited it and printed it out. As usual, times have changed. Today everything is on-line and usually in PDF format. Fortunately most PDF readers will allow you to select exactly what you want to print. Be it the whole document (but why?) a few pages or a specific page.

You click on the print icon or select print, depending on the reader, and then elect to print the entire document, only the page you are looking at or select a range of pages.

What I Would Change If I Were In Charge

By Jim Cerny, Director, Sarasota PC Users Group, FL

July 2013 issue, PC Monitor, www.spcug.org, [jimcerny123 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:jimcerny123@gmail.com)

Yes I am a big fan of technology. I enjoy it. To me, my computer devices (including my tablet and phone) and the things they can do for me are totally amazing. Computers are also very complex. I believe the day has long past when one person can know everything about them. I certainly am not anywhere close to that. But having used computers for a number of years, I am still totally amazed at some of the design decisions that are made about these devices and the software (programs, apps) they use. Do the designers sit around a table and say "Ok, let's do it that way, the users will figure it out."? Does there ever seem a real reason why they do the things they do? Do they ever trial their designs with real people like us?

I don't mean to be rude -- maybe just a bit amusing. Here is my "top ten" list of the things I would change if I were in charge:

10. Computer buttons on a device would be a different color from the rest of the device. I would like to be able to clearly see the buttons or switches, especially as the devices get smaller and smaller.
9. When I move or copy a file from one place to another, I would have a pop-up box appear that says "You have successfully moved (or copied) file X to folder Y." That way I could catch a mistake if I dropped it into the wrong folder. If other users are so confident that they would never move something to the wrong place, they could turn off this feature.
8. When updating software, I would keep the most-used commands in the same place in the window. For example, when updating an email program, I would not move the "write" command box from one side of the screen to the other, nor change its color from blue to red, nor change the word "write" to "compose" or "create."
7. I would have the "help" searches recognize the words most users would enter in the "help" search, not just the words the program designers decided to acknowledge. Maybe the software uses the term "font color", but some people may search help for "letter color" or "text color."
6. Finding seldom used commands or options should be easier to find and not removed out of sight because I haven't used them lately.
5. All companies that take my money should have a live person whom I can talk to on the phone in a reasonable time.
4. Companies which use an automatic answering system (a computer voice that answers the phone and asks you questions, also known as a "phone robot") MUST make their own management employees call their own number and go through the same "telephone tree" that their customers go through. And they

should all do it at least once every three months because they must “please listen carefully as our options have changed!”

3. If I give an answer to a telephone answering robot, I should not have to answer the same question again from a real person who finally gets on the line to help me.

2. When writing a new version of software, I would initially make it look like the old version and gradually help the user transition and learn as they use the new version.

And now (drum roll please) my number 1 thing I would change:

1. Company employees who finally help me on the phone should be knowledgeable of their own company’s web page and the information on it! Yes, believe it or not, you can constantly negotiate totally different deals and prices in person, on the phone, and on the Internet – all with the same company.

Well, I guess no world is perfect. And I am sure you have your “top ten” list too. If any of you get a call from a company asking for your opinion on any of these things, please let me know. For some reason no one calls and asks me. Maybe it’s because of my “telephone tree” answering message they have to listen to first.

Windows 8.1, iOS7 and Other Updates

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS

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Winston Churchill once said, “To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.” It seems that this is the mantra of today’s high tech world. The quest for perfection brings almost constant change. If you use Windows 8 or an Apple mobile device, you will want to read about the changes you need to make.

You get up in the morning and find that your Gmail looks different than it did yesterday. You get an announcement that there is an update to another program that you use every day. Get used to it. Change in the high tech world is inevitable. Most of the time the upgrades and updates bring added security, so you don’t want to stay with the old. You must move on.

This is what many people found with two recent updates. Apple updated their mobile operating system to iOS 7 and Microsoft updated Windows 8 to 8.1. Both of these updates are free for users who owned previous versions. Both add excellent features and increased security. However, both require the users to learn about how to use the new functionality. And, as usual, the user is given no instructions on how to upgrade or how to manage the new programs.

With previous upgrades of Windows, Microsoft performed the update for you if your computer was set to receive automatic updates. Windows 8.1 is different. You must visit the Microsoft Store to initiate the update. Just look for the green Store tile in your Start Screen. Then click on the Windows 8.1 banner in the Store.

Allow at least an hour for the update. When the installation is complete, you will be presented with the familiar color tile Start screen, but there are many subtle differences. First, if you want to search for something, you simply start typing what you want to search for. The search window automatically appears. What is different is that now Windows will search everywhere for you. You no longer have to tell it to search apps, files, etc. Windows will even search the Internet for you and present you with the results in one window.

Another change in Windows 8.1 gives you the ability to boot directly to the Desktop instead of the colorful Windows Start screen. Unfortunately, this option is fairly hidden. To turn it on you will have to go to the

Desktop and right-click on the toolbar on the bottom. Choose the Navigation option where you will see the choice to go to the Desktop instead of Start on sign in. You will also see other new choices in this area. They can be turned on and off at will, so feel free to play with them, if you like.

Several apps have also changed with Windows 8.1. One important change is that if you install a new app, it won't automatically show up on the Start screen. You will have to go to the All Apps page, right-click on the app and choose "Pin to Start" to have it show up there.

Apple's new operating system also brings many changes. If you are using a newer iPhone or iPad and you see a small red circle with a number in it above the Settings icon, this is the indication that there is an update available for your operating system. Tap on Settings, then General, then look for the update and give your permission to download and install it.

If this is the update for iOS 7, once complete you will notice that the icons and screens look quite different. This is a good thing since they have improved the clarity of the text and icons. Again, however, there are a few things to learn. In previous versions of iOS, you quit apps by double-clicking the Home button and holding down icons until they jiggled. Now when you double-click Home, you will be presented with all of the running apps as rectangular "cards". To stop an app, just put your finger on the card and flick it off the screen with an upward motion.

The Search on these Apple devices has also changed dramatically. You used to search by moving to the page to the left of the home screen, but that page is gone in iOS7. In order to start a search on your iPhone or iPad with iOS7, put your finger in the middle of the screen and swipe in a downward motion. This will bring up the Search screen and keyboard where you can enter your search terms.

Actually all of these changes are good. Just keep repeating that to yourself as you encounter frustrations at the new way of doing things. Remember change is good and you are on the path to perfection!
