BITS AND BYTES

The Newsletter of the Midland Computer Club

June 2007

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

This month's date: June 27th

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: How to set your system to utilize two monitors presented by Bill Tower.

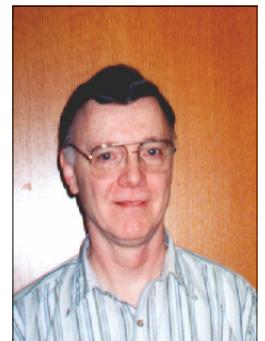**PROGRAM COORDINATORS**
Contact :
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What You Missed

In **May**, Howard Lewis demonstrated the new Microsoft Windows Vista. Some of the new features were demonstrated along with how to perform some of the standard procedures that we have become so comfortable with in Windows XP. Some of the new features include a completely revamped user interface, revamped Task Manager and Windows Search.

Upcoming Activities

In **June**, Bill Tower will demonstrate how to set your system to utilize two monitors. When working with multiple applications, there can be many instances where it is convenient to have two (or more) applications visible at a time.
There will be no meeting in **July.**

The President's Corner

FUD! And I don't mean the Elmer kind. I am talking about Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt. For those of you who were aware that there were computers back in the '80's, IBM (do you remember them?) was the king of FUD. Anytime a competitor was about to come out with something, IBM would announce something that would be coming out in the future that would be better. This would always raise the concern that if one were to purchase from a competitor, the IBM version would be better and therefore purchasing the other companies product would be a waste of time and money. I'm sure that almost everyone in the club knows that Microsoft supplanted IBM as the king of FUD in the '90's. In the past couple of months, Microsoft has taken on the open-source community big time and has claimed that open-source technologies violate 235 Microsoft patents. Not being a lawyer, I can't say for sure if they violate those patents or not, but from my viewpoint the patent system was not developed for software code. I had always felt that the copyright system was fine for protecting software code and the U.S. Patent Office made a mistake big time to start granting patents to software. It is widely believed that the U.S. Supreme Court has made it much more difficult to uphold a software based patent as valid in some of it's recent decisions. If this is true, then Microsoft has about as much chance of upholding these patents as a snowball has a chance of surviving on a Brazilian beach (outside of a cooler!). There is a lot of good open-source software out there (Linux and Firefox are a couple of them) that you should feel free to try. Don't fall for the Microsoft FUD machine and only buy commercial products feel free to try some of the open-source options!

What are your thoughts? Let me know.
Also, don't forget there will be no club meeting or newsletter in July. See you at the picnic in August!

— Howard Lewis

(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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(Continued from page 1)

August will feature our annual club picnic. As usual, the club will provide the hot dogs and soft drinks. All you have to do is bring a dish to share!

September will have Joe Lykowski demonstrating the use of virtual PCs and how they allow you to try out different operating systems without losing the one that you love.

Useful, useless and strange (in no particular order) Web Sites:
Some time ago, *Information Security* named the winners of their annual security awards. In talking with these winners, *Information Security* asked them to name their "Favorite Geek Site." The following sites are their favorites:

http://www.techbargains.com/ – Dave Dittrich, Senior security engineer and researcher, University of Washington's Center for Information Assurance and Cybersecurity

http://slashdot.org/ – Christofer Hoff, CISO and director of enterprise security services, WesCorp

http://www.mlb.com/ – Edward Amoroso, CISO, AT&T

http://www.iss.net/ – Charles McGann, Manager of secure infrastructure services, US Postal Service

http://www.wallstreetjournal.com/ – Richard Jackson, Chief Information Protection Officer, Chevron

http://www.openbsd.org/ – Patrick Heim, Vice president of enterprise security, McKesson Corp.

And for people who don't like tech sites and want something off-beat:
http://www.rooftopcomedy.com// – This site is about as off-beat as you get!

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

3 The next board meeting will be 7 p.m., August 14, 2007, at Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church, 5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland.

Tips, Tricks & Techniques

Use Keyboard Shortcuts to Launch Your Applications

Most people only use a few of their PC programs on a regular basis. To speed up the launching of your program, you can assign a keyboard shortcut to launch it immediately. To assign a shortcut to a program:

Right-click the application's icon and click on **Properties**.
Click the **Shortcut** tab and then *click* in the **Shortcut key** box.
Type in a letter, number or press a Function Key.
Click **OK**.

If you use a letter or a number, Windows automatically adds **Ctrl-Alt** to the shortcut. Now to run your program, all you have to do is put the key combination associated with the program. For example, if you assign the letter F to the shortcut key for Firefox, pressing the Ctrl-Alt-F combination will startup Firefox. Alternatively, if you assign F5 to the shortcut key for Firefox, pressing F5 will launch the application.

No more double-clicking or searching for something in your menus.

Why is that section of text underlined?

Sometimes you may be merrily typing away in Microsoft Word and suddenly some of the text displays a squiggly line below the text. If the line is "green," Word thinks there is something wrong with the grammatical structure of the sentence or phrase. If the line is "red," the problem is usually a misspelled word. In the case of the "red" line, the remedy is simple: *right-click* on the word and a list of correctly spelled words will appear for you to select what you really meant to type.

In the case of a "green" line, the answer is not always so obvious. Since grammar checkers are not perfect, you may wish to totally ignore the line. However, it is usually prudent to at least rethink the sentence, especially if it is rather cumbersome. If the sentence looks fine to you, you may still want to know why you have offended the Grammar Gods. To find out what Word thinks is wrong, simply *right-click* the underlined text and click the **About This Sentence** option. Word will then try to explain why it thinks your word or sentence is incorrect. Knowing this information, you can now decide if you agree with the Grammar Gods and try and correct the problem, or you can decide to tell the Grammar Gods to fly a kite and ignore them.

Splitting a Document Window in Microsoft Word

With Microsoft Word, you can view different parts of a document at the same time by splitting the window into two panes. Splitting a document window can make editing long documents easier, because changes that you make in one pane are reflected in the other. You also can work in a different view in each pane. For example, the document can be in Print Layout view in one pane and Normal view in the other.

The easiest way to split a document window is to *double-click* the **Split Box** at the top of the **vertical scroll bar**. When the mouse pointer is on the Split Box, it appears as an up-and-down arrow divided by two short lines. The document window then is split evenly into two panes.

To adjust the size of the panes, *drag* the split line up or down. Note that each pane has its own scroll bar and ruler as well. To switch between panes, simply click in the pane you want to activate or Press F6 to move between panes. To remove the split, *double-click* on the split line in the window.

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Finding Ghosts In Your Computer
by Mike Morris, Editor, Front Range PC Users Group,
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You think I am kidding? The Microsoft Knowledgebase article on this subject refers to "…"ghosted" devices…" and "Phantom devices…."

Before we get started with an explanation, four facts need to be identified:

I owe a thank you to fellow Front Range PC Users Group member Howard Norlin for suggesting this article.
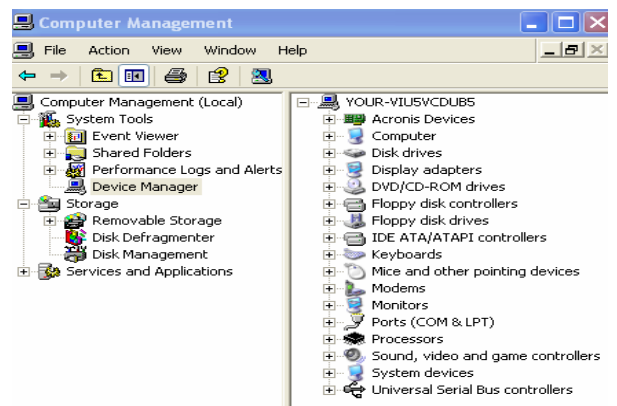
This article is based on the Microsoft Knowledgebase Article ID 315539 for Windows XP Home and Professional. Connect to http://support.microsoft.com/search/ to locate the article. Enter the article number, 315539, into the search field and GO. The article has the long title of: "Device Manager does not display devices that are not connected to the Windows XP-based computer."

Under the "STATUS" heading of this article, you will find this statement: "This behavior is by design." *[Ed. Note: that means that "(t)his behavior…" is a feature, not a bug].*

Yes, I am aware of the famous movie about finding and destroying ghosts. Even I am aware of that movie and I haven't been to a movie in a theater in decades. I decided not to use the movie title in this article in order to avoid any potential copyright conflict.

The Device Manager feature in Windows can be used for several purposes. Perhaps one of the best known uses is troubleshooting. Here is one method of obtaining access to Device Manager, using a series of mouse clicks:

Click on Start/Click on Control Panel/Double click on Administrative Tools/Double click on Computer Management. Then, under System Tools, click on Device Manager. A list of device categories is displayed:
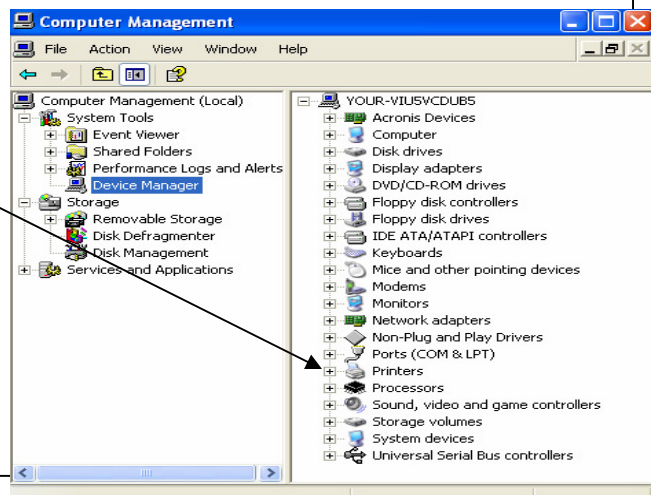
It may not be obvious at first glance, but not everything is displayed that you might expect. On the Computer Management Menu Bar, click on View, then on "Show hidden devices." Examine the result:

Look carefully, and you will see the "Printers" category has been added.

One may speculate—and debate—why the printer category is classified as a "hidden" device. The point is, selecting the "Show hidden devices" option still does NOT provide a complete list of hardware or software items that are—or have been—connected to the computer. That result is the origin of the phrase "ghosted devices."
Why should you care?

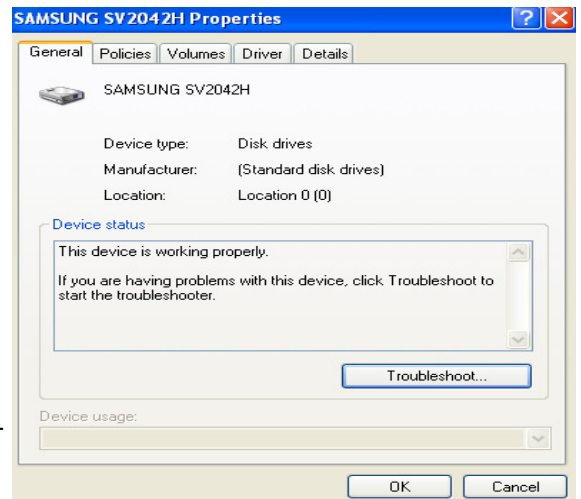Perhaps for the majority of users, knowledge of this issue is

not critical. However, as mentioned earlier, Device Manager can be used as a troubleshooting aid. For example, if I click on the + sign to the left of Disk Drives listed in the right panel of Device Manager, and then double click on the device displayed, a device-specific window is displayed.

The window offers several options for troubleshooting a malfunctioning device.

If the malfunctioning device is not listed when the "Show hidden devices" option is selected, it is time to use the procedure described in the article 315539. Note that the article makes reference to USB devices and docking stations for laptop computers.

There is another type of "ghost' revealed when using the procedure described in the Microsoft article. If you have been using your computer for any reasonable length of time, the probability is high that you have installed/uninstalled hardware and software since the original purchase. Using the "show_non_present_devices" command will reveal leftover drivers that were not (but should have been) removed during the uninstall process—"ghosts" hiding in your computer.

It is time to answer the two questions I am certain everybody has:

Q: Did I try the procedure?
A: Yes.

Q: Did I find any "ghosts"?
A: Yes. I found a driver from a virus protection software package I uninstalled a long time ago. It was listed under the "Non-Plug and Play Drivers" category.

I wonder if I can now join the ranks of "Ghost B_____." There—I (almost) said it.

The New, the Best, and the Worst - April 2007

Collected by Pim Borman, Webmaster, SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.

http://swipcug.apcug.org/ swipcug(at)sigecom.net

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Online Mania.

   Millions of people of all ages, worldwide, spend a large part of their lives in the make-believe online world of the Internet. **MySpace.com** is representative of several virtual social gathering places were participants, young and old, meet to chat and make virtual friends. So far, so good. But for many it has become a measure of someone's popularity how many "friends" they have and how cool they are. According to ZDNet (3/20/07), "Barack Obama is en route to a landslide victory over Hillary Clinton in the MySpace friends contest: Obama 55,674 friends versus Clinton 26,702 friends....John Edwards calls his MySpace friends Pals. He has 12,319 of them ... Republican candidates are trailing the Democrats overall at MySpace, big time: Rudy Giuliani 928 friends, John McCain 340 friends, Mitt Romney, 308 friends."

Lesser mortals are also competing for friends in the popularity contest. It's not only the number of friends that counts, but they have to be cool and glamorous. Enter Brant Walker who noticed, while browsing MySpace pages, that "some people would have a lot of good-looking friends, and others didn't." He came up with the idea "to turn cyberlosers into social-networking magnets" by providing fictitious postings from attractive people. So he set up a business, **FakeYourSpace.com**, to provide MySpace inhabitants with photographs and comments from hired "friends" — mainly attractive models — for 99 cents a month each. He used photographs of models from **iStockPhoto.com** until they found out about it and put a stop to it. According to *The New York Times* (2/26/07) Walker is regrouping and may soon be back in business again, together with others anxious to get in on a social reputation enhancement scam.

Meanwhile, online gaming continues to be an addiction for many. Although many of these games are violent and crude, others offer many examples of complex play that involve social interaction, collaboration and long-term goals. The major games, often referred to as **MMORPG**s (Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games), involve tools, weapons, and other artifacts that the players collect while playing the game over a period of time. Since some games started to allow transferring those artifacts to others, a lively market has sprung up on E-bay and similar sites where they are sold for real money. As a consequence, game "farms" have sprung up, mostly in third-world countries in the far East, where thousands of players are being paid to play MMORPGs all day to generate in-game goodies for sale at a good profit.

The amount of money involved is mind-boggling. In November 2006 *Business Week* reported that **Second Life** player Ailin Graef had become the first millionaire (in US dollars) based on the value in game dollars of land holdings by her avatar, Anshe Chung, in the online virtual world. A runaway success, Second Life is the creation of Linden Labs and its currency, Linden dollars (L$), is pegged at about L$270 to the US dollar (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_life). There are currency exchanges where game dollars can be traded for real currency, and Linden Labs intervenes in the background to keep the exchange rate fairly stable by adding or withdrawing game dollars from the virtual world. Maybe this is a good retirement hobby for Alan Greenspan!

Not surprisingly, the IRS is taking a good deal of interest and is considering **taxing the proceeds** from gaming. According to *PC World* (March 2007), the Joint Economic Committee of Congress (JEC) is working on a report regarding the economies of World of Warcraft, Second Life, and other MMORPGs. With an estimated world-wide "real-money trade" of $ 1 billion the tax man's hands are itching. But wait, there is more! It is estimated that the total wealth created within these games (in the form of artifacts not sold for real money, yet) amounts to some $10 billion. Exchanges of these artifacts between players in Second Life (instead of outright sales in real money) might be considered bartering, and bartering transactions are taxable according to IRS regulations. With $10 billion of assets being exchanged between players, the potential tax liabilities would be significant. The tax gurus are having a fine time pondering this. Fortunately there are other voices that don't want to spoil the fun of online gaming. We'll have to wait and see what the JEC comes up with. But just to be proactive, **H&R Block** has already established a virtual tax preparation office in Second Life (http://slurl.com/secondlife/HR%20Block/)

Not all online gaming is frivolous. Search engines such as Google have great difficulty labeling images so that they can be retrieved through keywords. It takes direct human involvement to describe an image in meaningful words, an impossible task with the untold billions of images on the Internet that have no captions or descriptions. Unless you make it into a game, that is.

Luis von Ahn, an assistant professor in the Computer Science Department at Carnegie Mellon University, developed a game called ESP in which two participants who can't communicate with each other are shown a picture and asked to come up with descriptive labels within a short time period, such as 90 seconds. Matching labels are awarded with points. The resulting matching labels proved to be highly descriptive of the images. The game turned out to be highly addictive. Google has licensed it and created

its own version, **Google Image Labeler** (images.google.com/imagelabeler). It is surprisingly difficult at first to generate descriptive labels for an image that is flashed on the screen for 90 seconds, but it probably gets easier with more practice. Obvious labels, such as "church" for a picture of a church that may have been generated previously, are declared off-limits. With an unending supply of images on the Web, the game can continue indefinitely. Give it a try!

Von Ahn was earlier credited with developing **Captchas,** those words written in a way that computers can't read them but humans can. They are used frequently to make sure that a human is at the end of a transaction, rather than another computer. You have probably encountered them, for instance when you signed up for a Yahoo email account.

Von Ahn is currently working on other games to help with recognition problems, such as locating objects inside an image, summarizing text passages, and developing common sense. (*Science News,* 3/17/07, thanks to Mike Borman)

Going 100% Digital with Genealogy – or Any – Records
By Tom J. Thiel, President, Lake-Sumter Computer Society, Florida
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In April 2007, I offered a presentation with the same title as above our the Lake-Sumter Computer Society's Genealogy Special Interest Group. For a handout see:
http://www.lscs.us/presentations/070412%20Thiel%20Going%20100%25%20Digital%20Handout.pdf

In my presentation -- which was based on an excellent article with a similar title by Dick Eastman in his outstanding Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter Plus Edition -- I extensively described the Xerox DocuMate 152 scanner that costs about $500 with bundled software. This, of course, was the one Mr. Eastman had obtained and on which he based his fine article.

Well, for me at least and for many the roughly $500 for the DocuMate 152 was a little bit on the pricey side and also it is more of a work group scanner with office document scanning as its primary design criteria.

One of the alternative scanners I found in my research for the presentation and also mentioned in my presentation was the Xerox DocuMate 510, flatbed scanner with an Automatic Document Feeder (ADF) rated at 10 pages per minute.

About a month ago I decided to obtain the DocuMate 510!

PC World has a very nice review of the Xerox 510 at the following web site;
http://www.pcworld.com/article/id,114941-page,1/article.html -- two paragraphs were extracted in the text below.

"If you need to turn a stack of paper documents into editable electronic text, using a scanner with optical character recognition software and an automatic document feeder attachment--like Xerox's new

$350 DocuMate 510--is a speedy alternative to typing."

"While the DocuMate 510 is a flatbed model--and therefore takes up more desk space than slimmer sheet-fed scanners--its removable lid allows you to scan pages from books or other bound volumes, including oversize originals. For any business or workgroup that needs an affordable document scanner, the DocuMate 510 is a solid choice." End Quote

I was able to find the 510 on the internet from a low of $298 to a high of $359. I paid $312 from Buy.com; however, I found that the local Office Depot (Mount Dora, FL) has the DocuMate 510 for $299, complete with bundled software.

And of special note, through June 30, 2007, Xerox is offering a $50 mail in rebate.

So far I am totally pleased with my DocuMate 510!

Scanner assembly went effortlessly with the aid of a very well illustrated assembly schematic manual. Installation requires that the software be installed before connecting the 510 to your computer via the USB port.

The 510 came with ScanSoft PaperPort 9.0 which controls the scanner, TextBridge Pro 9.0 for Optical Character Recognition, and ArcSoft Photo Impressions editing software all on one CD-ROM. It also came with a 58-page installation and scanning manual done quite nicely in slick paper, and a12-month warranty.

After the software was installed, the scanner components were connected to power and then I connected it to the computer with the USB cable. When I attempted to scan a document, however, I received an error message. By entering the error code into Google I was quickly able to determine that I had failed to adequately unlock the shipping lock slider switch.

After sliding the switch, the scanner worked perfectly. The sheet feeder works very well and even handles quite thin papers although hearing those go through the feeder may give one cause to worry a bit.

The ADF handles variable length paper from about 6 inches to up to 14-inch legal length papers -- all in the same stack in the ADF. And the fact that the scanner's cover may be easily removed to copy from books is also a plus for genealogists and for general home applications.

Mr. Eastman, and others, speaks at length on what these scanners and their software, collectively known as a Document Management System, will mean -- reducing the number of filing cabinets, safer storage and more rapid and complete retrieval.

All of these are, of course, quite true, but you should be aware that to convert all of your existing file cabinet's contents to digital information is not something you will be able to achieve quickly! Scanning all of your existing documents, whether your genealogy documentation or your credit card, banking or utility records, will take an appreciable amount of time and effort regardless of the scanner you employ.

At present I am scanning my bank statements, utility bills, medical Medicare and supplemental insurance statements, medical reports and lab analyses, credit cards and the like.

I have not yet begun to scan my Genealogy documents, but intend to -- this will be a daunting task; not the scanning but the organizing and assembling of the documents that I have to get them ready for scanning.

When you convert records to a document management system as I am doing with the 510, you need to decide what conversion scenario you will follow: scan all the documents that exist in your files or scan

from the day you begin scanning forward.

I have decided to convert most of my documents starting from today forward (except of course for genealogy records). This is simply because it is easier to do this than to "empty the file cabinet first."

Unlike the DocuMate 152, which is a duplex scanner meaning that both the front and rear of a page are scanned simultaneously with the same pass of the paper through the scanner, the 510 is a simplex meaning that only one side is scanned at a time.

However, the PaperPort Deluxe 9 scanning software packaged with the scanner handles this situation very well. Simply load the stack of papers and scan the front side of all pages. PaperPort will then ask "scan the other side?" and if you wish to you simply turn the stack over and scan the reverse side. The software handles the pagination automatically.

The 510 is very simple to use; one of the more difficult aspects of using it is to remember to load the paper with the face up!

The PaperPort 9.0 software, originally offered by ScanSoft and now by Nuance, works very effectively. One item I would like improved is the default file name, which is "Day of week, Month, Day and Year.pdf." Other options are available but it appears that all use the current date in one form or another.

So far I have not extensively used the OCR capability as that is a slower scanning process.

Another very useful feature of the PaperPort software is that it is a printer and may be used to print any document directly to a pdf, including documents from the web.

Managing the scanned documents effectively can also be challenging. I created a file folder structure similar to my physical filing cabinet and that seems to work very well so far.

I scan a document or set of documents and then merely drag these and drop them in the appropriate folder. I then rename the file to usually "YYMMDD Plus a Few Descriptive Words" in front of the default file name.pdf. A medical record, for example, would contain the year, month and day of the medical service, the physician's name and procedure, followed by the default scan date. I find that using YYMMDD format for my records allows me to sort or otherwise keep a logical file and folder order sequence by date; to use the standard MMDDYY format will not sort logically.
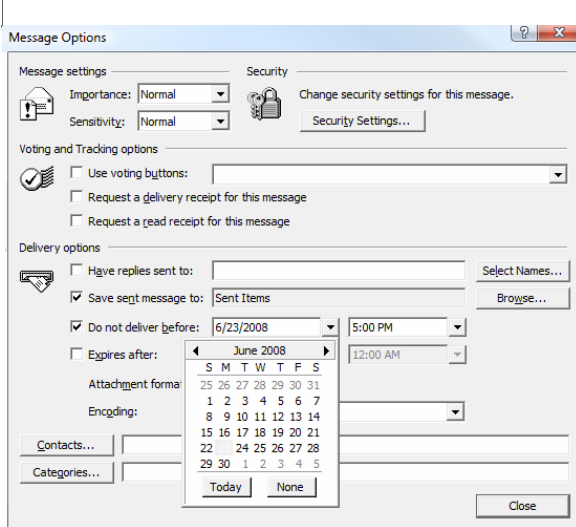
If you are going to scan older records then you should spend some time in document preparation before beginning scanning. Ensuring that documents are in proper order, staples removed, corners straightened, etc., will speed up the scanning process.

And you must verify your copy before discarding the paper document! I am discarding most of the documents I have scanned so far.

All of my scanning to date has been black and white and at 300 dots per inch resolution, which in most cases has been adequate. This will result in a pdf file of perhaps 35KB per page.

If you decide to convert your paper files to 100% digital records, then you simply must practice excellent and very frequent backup procedures. Otherwise you will lose everything! I make a copy on an external drive after every session.

The choice is yours of course, but my advise is: "Go 100% Digital, and do it now!" ###

Info, Info Everywhere, and Not a Thought to Think
By Vinny La Bash, Columnist, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
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Many people think that the internet is the greatest thing since sliced whatchamacallit or the worst abomination that's ever been inflicted upon the human race. As usual the truth lies somewhere in-between. There is no doubt that the internet is a great source of seemingly limitless information, and the information found there tends to fall into three general categories:

Information which is totally useless. Did you know that the average cloud weighs 300,000 pounds? Neither did I, but that's the sort of thing you are most likely to get on the internet unless you are careful.

Information which is useful, but not at the moment. I invariably discover a great tax deduction I didn't know about on April 16th. It's too late for this year, and I will probably either forget about it next year or misfile the thing where I can't find it.

Information which is useful now. This is extraordinarily rare, comparable to finding eyebrows on eggs, but we all get lucky occasionally.

The data you find in the first category is not only safe to ignore, it's essential to your sanity to ignore it. The third category usually takes care of itself. Simply use it for whatever purpose you have in mind and you're done. The second category is the one that requires a good degree of sound management to avoid wasting time, and that is the problem.

World wide productivity could double overnight if the internet would only send us the information we need at the right time. We spend too much time refining our Google searches, investigating blogs, experimenting with RSS feeds or mucking around our own data bases. One piece of missing information has the potential to make the best presentation look like the product of a misinformed dolt.

Is having the information you need when you need it nothing more than a World Wide Web fantasy? Perhaps not. Did you know that you can set a reminder email for future delivery in Outlook? Here's how to do it:
Open Outlook (obviously).
Select the email to forward.
Click on the **Forward** button.
Click on the **Options…** button.
Put a check in the **Do not deliver before** box**.**
Select the date of delivery.
Click **Close.**

Don't set a delivery date to a point where you are unlikely to have your present computer unless you are in a corporate network where the systems administrator can make the proper adjustments. Even then, be realistic.

Send yourself notes about meetings shortly before you need them. Include information not only about the subject of the meeting, but about the people attending with you.
Your colleagues will think you're a certified genius.

All kinds of things can be done with Outlook and its future delivery capabilities. The usual subjects such as birthdays, anniversaries, and recurring meetings suggest themselves. Investors can send themselves reminders that an option they own is about to expire or to watch for that important dividend payment. Almost any kind of regular to-do item lends itself to this task. Get that tax form in the mail by April 15th. Do you really need a reminder for that?

What do you do if you don't have Outlook? Neither Yahoo, Hotmail nor Outlook Express offers this feature, but there is a web site that can help. Go to www.futureme.org and create your email for future delivery. This site is well suited for information you won't need for months if not years. Of course, delivery depends on the web site still being in existence when you need it, and it doesn't handle attachments. If you can live with those limitations, go for it.

People talk a lot about traffic congestion, but unlike the weather, you can do something about it. If you commute regularly to work take a peek at www.traffic.com. The site will send you real-time traffic maps, road condition alerts and jam alerts. This site is great for road warriors or anyone who drives over regular routes.

Do you suffer from springtime allergies? Then take a trip to www.weather.com to have pollen, weather, and other alerts delivered directly to your desktop. Not everything has to be delivered by email.

Cutting down on information overload is the best reason for using these tools. Avoiding data until you need it will free you from the drudgery of sifting through piles of irrelevant information to find the one item you need, and best of all, you won't worry about being unprepared when an unexpected deadline suddenly looms up before you.

Use information efficiently and you will become respected, admired, and the opposite sex will seek you out. When people inevitably accuse you of having a perfect memory, tell them you have a photogenic mind.

Don't forget...no meeting or newsletter in July. Have a great summer!

The Tornado – A Review
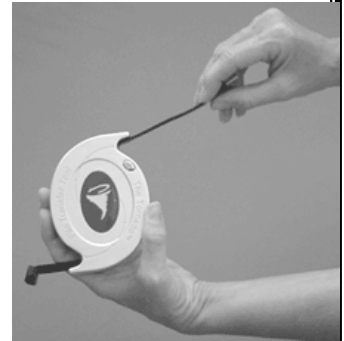By Sharon Walbran, Editor, The Digital Viking, Twin Cities PCUG, MN
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Transferring files to a new computer is a task that's become common with people replacing their computers every few years or so. A product that can make the transfer of files and settings less painful is "The Tornado" from Data Drive Thru, available online at <<www.datadrivethru.com>>

The lightweight device which fits in the palm of your hand houses two USB cables. One cable is connected to the old computer; the other USB cable is connected to the new computer. No software needs to be installed if the computer running the software has Windows XP installed. When the USB cables are connected, built-in software automatically starts up, displaying a split screen with the folders and files on the old computer in one half of the screen and the folders and files from the other computer in the other half of the screen. Copying files from one computer to the other involves dragging the files from one half of the screen to the destination folder in the other half. The computer you are using for the transfer is identified as "This Computer"; the other as "Other Computer."

Transfer of files can be made from computers running versions of Windows back to Windows 98. If both computers are running Windows 98, the company provides drivers for Windows 98. What makes this device particularly attractive is the speed of transfer. The company claims a transfer rate of 25 MB per second and my experience confirms the speed.

The span when the USB cables are fully extended is just 4 feet, but that can be expanded by using a USB extension cable. However, as a result of the limited range, the device works best when computers are placed in close proximity to each other.

No mention is made on Data Drive Thru's website as to whether this is one of the transfer devices approved by Microsoft for transfer of files and settings from Windows XP computers to computers running Microsoft Vista.

The current price is about $60 but discounts have sometimes been offered to user groups. The company also offers the Eraser product which is touted as removing all data from a hard drive