

# BITS AND BYTES

October 2010

Newsletter of the Midland Computer Club

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

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

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

**This month's date:**  
**October 27, 2010**

**This month's topics:**  
Laura Hammel on 'Cloud Computing'  
Carol Picard on 'Keeping Your Computer Updated'

**PROGRAM COORDINATORS**  
**Contact : Co-Chairpersons**  
Howard Lewis                      lewis3ha@chartermi.net  
Joe Lykowski                      joseph@lykowski.com

**What you missed! September meeting**—Joe Lykowski discussed the Windows Registry and Local Settings.

**Upcoming Activities:**  
NOTE: November meeting is 3rd Wednesday—November 17th

## President Piper's Ponderings



In keeping with the Halloween season, I would like to talk about Scary Computer Possibilities. It will be the same old things, only ranked based upon my own experiences.

- 1 – SCAMS Primarily in the form of emails, you frankly have to be incredibly stupid or naïve (ISON) to fall for these offers that are 'too good to be true.' But I would place such TV ads as 'mail us your gold jewelry, and we will give you top dollar for it' in the same category;
- 2 – LOSING DATA, i.e., NO BACKUPS This covers everything from pictures to the novel you have worked on for the past year. A paper copy is acceptable, but an electronic version is far better if you have to restore;
- 3 – CRASHES I am referring here to 'pilot error' which means something the user has done has caused a computer to become inoperable. This is the reason restore points were invented;
- 4 – FALLING BEHIND Unless you are Aristotle (who was the last person who may have known 'everything there was to know'), we all have severe shortcomings in keeping up with current technology. Pick your areas of interest and don't sweat the rest;
- 5 – PRICING I don't think you can go too wrong in this area. Competition keeps prices similar; it is the problem of buying too much computer for your actual needs;
- 6 – VIRUSES I put this risk far down on my 'scary' list because new computers come with trial anti-virus software and again, unless you are ISON, or under 18 years of age, you will not shoot yourself in the foot with a virus;
- 7 – PHYSICAL DAMAGE We are talking about natural disasters here, and frankly, the cost of replacing a computer is peanuts;

(continued. on page 2 - column 2)

## 2010 MCC OFFICERS

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President Larry Piper larryP56@chartermi.net  
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 Editor Carol Picard webbyte@yahoo.com  
 Webmaster

### **EMAIL:**

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### **BOARD MEMBERS**

Al Adams  
 Rich Holbrook

### **PUBLICITY**

Kathy Bohl kbohl30265@aol.com

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

### **President Piper's Ponderings (cont.)**

8 – LEMONS I have never had one of these, and I believe the quality of electronic products to be very high;

9 – POWER OUTAGES In my neighborhood, I probably see this occurrence more than the other eight combined. Still, the long term effects tend to be minimal.

Be ready to defend your scary list at October's General Meeting.

*(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):

[www.pandora.com](http://www.pandora.com)

If you like listening to music as you browse the Internet, Pandora will play the kind of music you like.

[www.photo.net](http://www.photo.net)

Share your photos, discuss how to improve your photos, or learn about the various digital cameras that are available.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT-mVT-ORww>

Watch the future of train travel as it exists today in China.

[www.alice.com](http://www.alice.com)

Buy your necessary home essentials directly from the manufacturer.

## Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be 7 p.m.,  
 November 9, 2010, @ Chapel Lane  
 Presbyterian Church, 5501 Jefferson Ave.,  
 Midland.

### **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**  
 P.O. Box 132  
 Midland, MI 48640-0132

**Attn: Membership Chairman**

You may also pay for membership at a regular club meeting

## Tips, Tricks & Techniques

Submitted by Howard Lewis

### Reduce the Size of the Start Menu Icons in Windows 7

If you would like to make room for additional items on your Start Menu, you can switch to smaller icons by using the following steps:

Right-click the *Start* button and click on *Properties*.

On the **Start Menu** tab, click the *Customize* button.

Scroll down to the **Use large icons** option (near the bottom of the list) and remove the check.

Click OK twice.

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### A Faster way to Shutdown Windows 7

The normal shutdown procedure for Windows 7 is to click Start and then Shut Down. You can make the process slightly faster by creating a shortcut to shutdown Windows 7 on your desktop. To do this, perform the following steps:

Right-click the *desktop*, select *New* and click on *Shortcut*.

In the resulting pop-up window, type the following command into the box for **Type the location of the item**: *shutdown.exe -s -t 00*. (There is a space between the *-t* and the *00*. This is the command to shutdown Windows 7.)

Click *Next*.

Type a *meaningful name* for the shortcut.

Click *Finish*.

Now to shutdown Windows 7, simply double-click the new shortcut.

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### Change Internet Explorer 8's Default Search Tool

When you first install Internet Explorer 8, you can install using either the default settings or do a custom install. If you install using the default settings, IE8 uses Bing as the default tool. However, many people already have their favorite search tool and would rather use something else (e.g., Google, Yahoo, etc.). It is rather easy to change your default search tool once IE8 has been installed. To change the tool, perform the following steps:

Click the *down arrow* next to the browser's search box (usually located near the upper-right corner of the IE8 window) and select *Find More Providers*.

Select your desired search engine and click *Add to Internet Explorer*.

In the resulting pop-up box, check *Make this my default search provider*.

Click *Add*.

Now IE8 will use your preferred search provider as the default search tool.

## **INTERNET SHOPPING - A VIEW OF ONE OF THE BEST (Part 2 of 2)**

*By Ron Hirsch - Boca Raton Computer Society*

This is the second and final part of this article on Newegg. In part 1, I listed all the niceties that Newegg offers when you are looking for a product. In part 2 I will cover the numerous great things that occur after you place your order.

**COMMUNICATION DURING THE ORDER** - I personally feel that poor communication is one of the very serious problems in this world today, at all levels of society. But Newegg's communications are superb. Here are the emails you will receive after placing an order.

Immediately after you place your order, you will receive an email confirming your order placement.

Shortly after that, a second email will arrive, confirming that your credit card has been successfully charged.

Within the next 48 hours or so, a third email will arrive, stating that your order has shipped, and a tracking number is shown below in a hot link. Click on this link, and window will open on the shipper's site, giving details of your delivery status. You do not have to copy the tracking number, and then go to the UPS, or FEDEX site, and paste in there. Newegg takes care of all of that automatically.

The final email that comes is a copy of your invoice, which you can print out, if you have not already done so.

### **HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH NEWEGG**

There are three excellent and practical ways to communicate with Newegg.

The first is via email. They will generally reply very quickly, usually within 24 hours.

The second is to call them on their 800 number, where you will get a capable person to talk with, generally with a minimum of "hold" time.

The third way is to enter into a live chat. This is essentially texting to them. You enter your message to them via the keyboard, and they respond. Often they will text you that they must look up info, and to please be patient.

I have made it a practice to compose my initial message to them prior to starting this process.

My typing skills are poor, and if I have a lot to say in my inquiry, I want to prepare it prior to getting someone on my case, and then having them wait for minutes until I get my message keyed in. So I just type the message into a blank document in a text editor such as Notepad, MS Word, WordPerfect, or whatever. After I have it all typed out, I then select it all, and copy it to the clipboard, and then paste it into the message box on the live chat screen.

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*(Internet Shopping—A View of One of the Best—continued from page 4)*

## **IF THERE IS A PROBLEM AFTER YOU RECEIVE YOUR ORDER**

Here is another area where Newegg really stands head and shoulders above most other suppliers. And I got very extensive experience in this area during my latest computer build.

I had purchased almost two dozen items for my new computer, and its peripheral items. Unfortunately, several of the manufacturers must have been having a bad run of quality control, and a number of these items were nonfunctional right out of the box – not Newegg's fault of course. Here is where Newegg shines brightly.

I contacted them about the problem, and shortly after, they replied to me via email with an RMA number, and a link to their site where I could download and print out a prepaid UPS label. Then I was instructed to repackage the item with all its accessories in the original packaging, paste on the UPS label, and drop it off at the nearest UPS location. When they receive the item, they will then send out a replacement ASAP

Alternatively, a second option is offered. If I wanted the replacement faster, or I did not have the original packaging material anymore. I could do the following – place a new order for the same item, and have it charged to my credit card. Then when I received the new order, I could use that packing material along with the prepaid UPS label to them to return the defective item to them. When they received it, they would then credit my credit card for the second purchase.

## **SUMMARY - AND MY OVERALL VIEW OF NEWEGG**

Dealing with Newegg these past months has been such a pleasant and rewarding experience, that I have established a new personal policy for all my future purchases when Newegg is a potential supplier.

If they do indeed offer the product I seek, and even if their pricing is slightly higher than the competition, I will buy from them.

Too often, people lose sight of the fact that a very important part of any purchase of any type, anywhere, is the service one will receive, not only during the purchase, but also after the product is received.

While I have found companies who may be good in some of these areas, I have never found a company who is as good as Newegg in all these areas. And no, I am not writing this because I will get anything special from the company. I just wanted to share my experiences with all of you, and do all I can to keep this company prospering, as I hope to continue dealing with them for many years.

One further comment – they have a daily mailing which offers special bargains, often with free shipping, and very special pricing for limited periods. If you'd like to receive their emails, go to their site, and sign up for these daily emails.

If more companies took a lesson from Newegg, online shopping could become a very pleasant experience every time. I know that when I shop with Newegg, my hassles are over. If you've never shopped with them, consider them in the future, and I'm sure you will agree with my views.

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*(Internet Shopping—A View of One of the Best—continued from page 5)*

## HAPPY SHOPPING

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site <http://www.brcs.org/hirsch.php>. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a looseleaf notebook for future reference. Remember, the PDF version offers full color, wherever color elements might be involved, and often images which could not be used in the Boca Bits hard copy. So, if there are color elements in the original, the PDF copy will display them that way.

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## Adding Commands to Explorer Context Menu in Windows 7

*by Vinny La Bash, [vlabash@comcast.net](mailto:vlabash@comcast.net)*

*Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.*

A lot of things are possible when you bring up the Explorer context menu in Windows 7, but neither the Copy To folder nor Move To folder commands are one of them. Why did Microsoft leave these two useful commands off the menu? Only the programmers in Redmond know the answer.

You can get around this annoyance by dragging and dropping to a different folder or disk drive, but that requires you to have at least two different windows open simultaneously. Copying the file or files from one window to another is also an option. Cut and paste is available, but either of those two actions necessitates leaving the current window and navigating around your system. Anyone with a basic knowledge of how files and folders work can do this, but it is much more trouble than necessary. You could wear out your mouse with all the clicking needed.

Some people have difficulty working with a mouse, and others prefer working with a keyboard. Whatever operational category you occupy, a context menu is much easier to operate in than all this clicking, dragging, and dropping.

We can add the Copy To folder and Move To folder commands to the context menu with some relatively easy edits to the Registry. Registry edits often appear to be one of the great mysteries of the computer environment that can totally baffle or flat out terrify those who are unfamiliar with its inner workings. For that reason editing the Registry is officially and traditionally considered a task saved for experienced users only. These fears are largely exaggerated.

With a little direction and a few proactive measures, most dangers can easily be avoided. The best proactive measure before taking on the following exercise is to back up the Registry in case you make some kind of irreversible mistake.

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(Adding Commands to Explorer Context Menu in Windows 7—continued from page 6)

With that out of the way let's get started:

- Open the registry editor by left clicking on the Windows orb located at the bottom left hand side of your display.
- Type regedit in the text box and press *Enter*.
- Respond to any dialog boxes that appear.
- Navigate to the following registry folder.  
HKEY\_CLASSES\_ROOT\AllFilesystemObjects\shellex\ContextMenuHandlers
- Right-click on the ContextMenuHandlers folder.
- Select New/Key.  
The New Key appears and you will be asked to name it. Give it the name Copy To and then double-click the (Default) value of the new key's right-hand pane. The system will add the "folder" part of the command. You don't need to specify it.
- Enter the following series of letters, numbers, and dashes EXACTLY as shown below. The series is case sensitive. Don't forget to include the brackets.  
**{C2FBB630-2971-11D1-A18C-00C04FD75D13}**

When you're done and completely certain you have entered the information exactly as shown in the bolded line above, press *Enter*, and the Copy To folder command will now be part of the context menu.

Now let's add the Move To folder command to the context menu. Right-click the ContextMenuHandler folder again.

The New Key again appears. Name it Move To and then double-click the (Default) value of the new key's right-hand pane. The system will add the "folder" part of the command. You don't need to specify it. Enter the following series of letters, numbers, and dashes EXACTLY as shown below. This series is also case sensitive. Don't forget to include the brackets. **{C2FBB631-2971-11D1-A18C-00C04FD75D13}**  
Note: This series is only one character different from the first series.

When you're done and completely certain you have entered the information exactly as shown in the bolded line above, press *Enter*, and the Move To folder command will now be part of the context menu.

Finish up by closing the Registry Editor.

From now on, whenever you right-click on a file from within Explorer, the Copy To folder and Move To folder commands will be ready and waiting. Your new commands also work with multiple files.

You can add a specific folder destination to the context menu without editing the registry.

- Open the Computer icon from the Desktop.
- Open the C: drive or wherever Windows 7 is installed.
- Navigate to C:\Users\Username\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Windows\SendTo  
Note: This folder contains shortcuts to all the destinations displayed from the SendTo command on Explorer's context menu.  
*[Editor's Note - If you don't see the AppData folder, enable "Show hidden files, folders, or drives" under Tools—Folder Options—View]*
- Right-click on an open space in this window.
- Click New and then Shortcut.  
The Create Shortcut dialog box appears. It will prompt you to enter a destination in the text box. Enter the path to the desired destination or use the Browse button to find a folder buried somewhere in your system.

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(Adding Commands to Explorer Context Menu in Windows 7—continued from page 7)

- Click Next, and give the shortcut a name.
- Click Finish to activate the new destination on the context menu.
- While holding the left shift button down, close the SendTo window.
- The new target is now available in your SendTo menu.

*[Editor's Note - If you enabled "Show hidden files, folders, or drives" under Tools—Folder Options—View — make sure to disable it]*

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## Arming Yourself Against Identity Theft

*Jay Ferron, CEH, CISM, CISSP, CSWP, MCITP, MVP, Security Practice Lead - Global Knowledge*

Identity theft is a very fast-growing problem, and you can become a victim if you're not careful. According to Privacy Rights Clearinghouse (<http://www.privacyrights.org/>), compromised personal information collected during data breaches includes Social Security numbers, account numbers, and driver's license numbers, all of which are useful to identity thieves. Since January 2005, 356,088,361 records containing sensitive personal information have been involved in security breaches in the U.S. This does not include incidents where identity theft was not reported.

What is identity theft? Simply put, it occurs when some else says that he or she is you and uses your credit and identity to commit crimes. The consequences can include ruining your credit or worse. And if your identity is stolen, it can take a long time to fix the issues that it will cause.

How does one become a victim of Identity Theft? Most of the time, people give the thieves the necessary information. For example, have you ever gotten an e-mail that says, "You won a 42-inch TV!" or "You won the lottery!" Have you ever received email from an overseas country stating that someone died and left \$300,000,000, and all you need to do to get 69% of the money is..? You might get an e-mail saying "There is an issue with your account, please login with your user name and password. Do yourself a favor; do not answer and put the mail in the deleted folder.

You also can become a victim by downloading malware or spyware. According to Wikipedia, "malware, short for malicious software, is software designed to infiltrate a computer system without the owner's informed consent."

On the Microsoft website (<http://www.microsoft.com/security/spyware/whatis.aspx>), spyware is defined as "a general term used to identify software that performs certain behaviors, generally without appropriately obtaining your consent first, such as: advertising collecting personal information, or changing the configuration of your computer. Spyware is often associated with software that displays advertisements (called adware) or software that tracks personal or sensitive information."

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*(Arming yourself against identity theft—continued from page 8)*

Malware and spyware can be downloaded to your computer in any number of ways. They can get in through down-loading games or music from the Web, peer-to-peer sharing networks, some screensavers, and some "Free software."

What are the criminals looking for? Information such as Social Security numbers, passwords, your mother's maiden name, your birth date, billing and e-mail addresses, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, and ATM pins. The more information you give them, the easier it is to steal your identity.

### **Simple steps to prevent becoming a victim**

1. Think security. If you are not sure about something, do not open or install it.
2. If asked to download a file, and you are not sure what it does, do not download it.
3. Get an anti-spyware program, keep it updated, and use it.
4. Do not open e-mails from people you do not know.
5. Do not open attachments if you are not positive you know what they are.
6. If an e-mail offers something too good to be true, it probably is a scam.
7. Use anti-virus software; update it at least once a day or more.
8. Patch your computer's operating system (all vendors have updates).
9. Patch you applications (word, games, mail programs, etc.).
10. Be smart; know what services run on your computer, and what ports are open.
11. Stay away from peer-to-peer sharing software programs.
12. Think! Computer Security is about what you do as well as what you don't do.
13. If your computer has a Trojan or worm, you can try to fix it BUT it probably has more than one Trojan or worm. It's better to rebuild if you want to be truly secure.
14. Wipe out the hard drive when disposing of computers with utilities such as Active KillDisk (Free) WipeDisk, or BCwipe.
15. Think before you click.

### **If You Are a Victim**

1. Contact all of your banking, credit card, mortgage, etc., companies.
2. Contact the police.
3. Report it to the Federal Trade Commission.
4. Prepare an ID Theft Affidavit and Fraudulent Account Statement.

To learn more about identity theft you can go to:

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/index.html>

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## **Free Online Scanners Detect and Remove Malware**

*by Ira Wilsker*

WEBSITES:

<http://housecall.trendmicro.com>

<http://quickscan.bitdefender.com>

<http://www.eset.com/online-scanner>

<http://onecare.live.com/site/en-us/default.htm>

<http://onecare.live.com/site/en-us/center/howSAFE.htm>

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(Free online scanners detect and remove malware - continued from page 9)

In recent weeks I have written about a variety of utilities that can detect and remove malware from an infected computer. Some of the utilities can be downloaded and installed, and run as necessary to detect and remove any malware that may have penetrated the primary security software that was installed on that computer. Other utilities discussed previously in this column are portable and could be run from a flash drive to detect and remove malware, while still others are intended to remove stubborn malware by utilizing a bootable CD that has the anti-malware software installed on it. One of the simplest and most popular ways to detect any malware that may have infected a computer is the free online scan, provided by several of the security companies.

For many years I have been using TrendMicro's Housecall ([housecall.trendmicro.com](http://housecall.trendmicro.com)) as a tool to check if a computer is infected, but like all other online scanners, Housecall requires a functional internet connection.

The screenshot shows the Trend Micro website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Trend Micro logo, the tagline "Securing Your Web World", and links for "About Trend Micro", "Sign In", "Shop", "Support", "North America [+]", and "Quick Links". A search bar is also present. Below the navigation bar is a red horizontal menu with categories: "HOME & HOME OFFICE", "SMALL BUSINESS", "MEDIUM BUSINESS", "ENTERPRISE", "SERVICE PROVIDERS", and "PARTNERS".

The main content area is titled "HouseCall - Free Online Virus Scan". It features a "NEW Version: 7.1" badge and a house icon. The text reads: "Think your PC is infected? HouseCall can quickly identify and fix a wide range of threats including viruses, worms, Trojans, and spyware. It is now faster, more powerful and browser independent!".

Under "WHAT'S NEW?", it lists:

- Full scan and custom scan options, in addition to Quick Scan.
- Support for 64-bit and Windows 7.

There are two download buttons: "Download HouseCall 7.1 (32-bit)" and "Download HouseCall 7.1 (64-bit)". Below these are social media sharing buttons for Facebook (4720 shares), Retweet (387), Buzz (141), and StumbleUpon (3,315).

At the bottom of the main content area, there are four tabs: "Overview", "Getting Started", "System Requirements", and "Feedback and FAQs". The "Overview" tab is selected. The text under this tab describes HouseCall as a highly popular on-demand scanner and mentions its intuitive interface and the use of Trend Micro's Smart Protection Network.

A sidebar on the left contains a "TrendWatch" section with links to "Current Threat Activity", "Awareness & Prevention", and "Research & Analysis". Below this is a "Free Tools" section with "Prevention Tools" and "Clean-up Tools". The "HouseCall" section lists "HijackThis", "CWShredder", "RootKit Buster", and "RUBotted". Other links include "Trial Downloads", "Widgets", and "Core Technologies".

TrendMicro recently released Housecall version 7.1, which will run on most browsers, including Internet Explorer and Firefox, and on any Windows system with at least Windows XP installed. While 32 bit versions of Housecall have been available for years, Housecall now has versions explicitly for 64 bit systems running Windows 7-64 or Vista-64. When using Housecall, the user needs to select a build by clicking on "Download HouseCall 7.1 (32-bit)" or "Download HouseCall 7.1 (64-bit)". Housecall will download and install a small web based launcher (1.4 mb) that is a "Stand-alone, browser-independent implementation (which) eliminates compatibility issues associated with browser-activated scanners." The user can select a quick scan which utilizes a "targeted scanning of critical system areas and active threats, reducing scan times to within a few minutes."

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(Free online scanners detect and remove malware - continued from page 10)

I typically do a quick scan as one of my first tasks when cleaning a computer. A full scan will be much more comprehensive, but take much longer; a recent scan I performed on a Vista laptop took over an hour, but most recent full scans I performed were completed in as little as 15 minutes. The new version 7.1 of Housecall also allows the user to selectively scan chosen folders (Custom Scan), which may be a time saver, but will only check the selected folders, possibly missing some malware; this is precisely why I prefer the slower full scan. As is the current technological rage, Housecall uses cloud computing as the source of malware signatures, greatly improving download times and processing speed, while always using the absolute latest malware information. In addition to detecting and removing viruses, Trojans, keyloggers, and other common threats, Housecall can even detect and remove the difficult to find rootkits, as well as other sophisticated threats.

The well respected security vendor BitDefender offers one of the fastest online scanners, that will detect, but not remove active malware. It is often important to quickly know if a computer is infected or not, and that is precisely the service offered by BitDefender. The scanner offered is BitDefender Quick Scan which runs from the browser, and is compatible with most major browsers, including Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome.

The screenshot shows the BitDefender QuickScan website. At the top left is the QuickScan logo. To the right are links for 'About', 'F.A.Q.', and 'On your website'. Below these are several language flags and a dropdown menu set to 'English US'. The main content area has a red background with the heading '60-Second QuickScan'. Below this heading is the text 'The quickest way to find if your computer is infected!' followed by a bulleted list:

- Very fast scanning. Less than 60 seconds
- Runs online from any Internet connected PC
- Doesn't slow down your PC
- Based on award winning BitDefender anti-malware technologies

A large '» Start scan' button is positioned to the right of the list. Below the list is a section 'Add QuickScan to:' with input fields for 'YOUR WEBSITE' and 'Google'. Below the main banner are three columns:

- Permanent protection:** Text describing BitDefender's 2010 line of security solutions, an image of the BitDefender Internet Security 2010 software box, and a 'Find more.' link.
- On your website:** A list of benefits: 'Add value to your website', 'Increase visitors loyalty', 'Monetize website traffic', and 'Use customized widgets'. Below the list is an image of a website widget and a 'get it now' button.
- QuickScan - Feedback:** A form with buttons for 'share', 'feedback', and 'recommend'. It includes input fields for 'Your e-mail address', 'your feedback message', and 'enter verification code' (with a CAPTCHA image showing 'bf7f5'). A 'send' button is at the bottom.

The footer contains 'About', 'F.A.Q.', 'On your website' links on the left and the text 'Quick Scan is proudly powered by bitdefender' on the right.

Quick Scan will run on Microsoft Windows 2000, XP SP2, Vista, and Windows 7. This Quick Scan is very fast, often completing a scan in about one minute. One major advantage of BitDefender Quick Scan is that you can use it without having to uninstall your existing data security product." The online scan engine is always up to date, as it is updated automatically each time it is run. The BitDefender Quick Scan is

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(Free online scanners detect and remove malware - continued from page 11)

invoked simply by clicking on the "Start Scan" button, which connects the computer to the "cloud" where other very fast computers do much of the work. There are no malware signatures to download, as they are maintained and constantly updated in the cloud, and all actual scanning is done by the remote servers in the cloud; this is why BitDefender Quick Scan does not drain system resources on the computer, and can run so quickly. One other reason for the speed is that, "QuickScan only detects viruses which are active in memory or present in files that are run at system startup. Inactive virus bodies are not scanned for and therefore not detected." To perform a thorough scan, and remove both the active and inactive malware components will require a scan with another scanner. I use the Quick Scan as a very fast check to determine if a computer is infected, and if so, then I determine the subsequent action.

ESET has a complete free online scanner and malware remover " ESET Online Scanner" at [www.eset.com/online-scanner](http://www.eset.com/online-scanner).



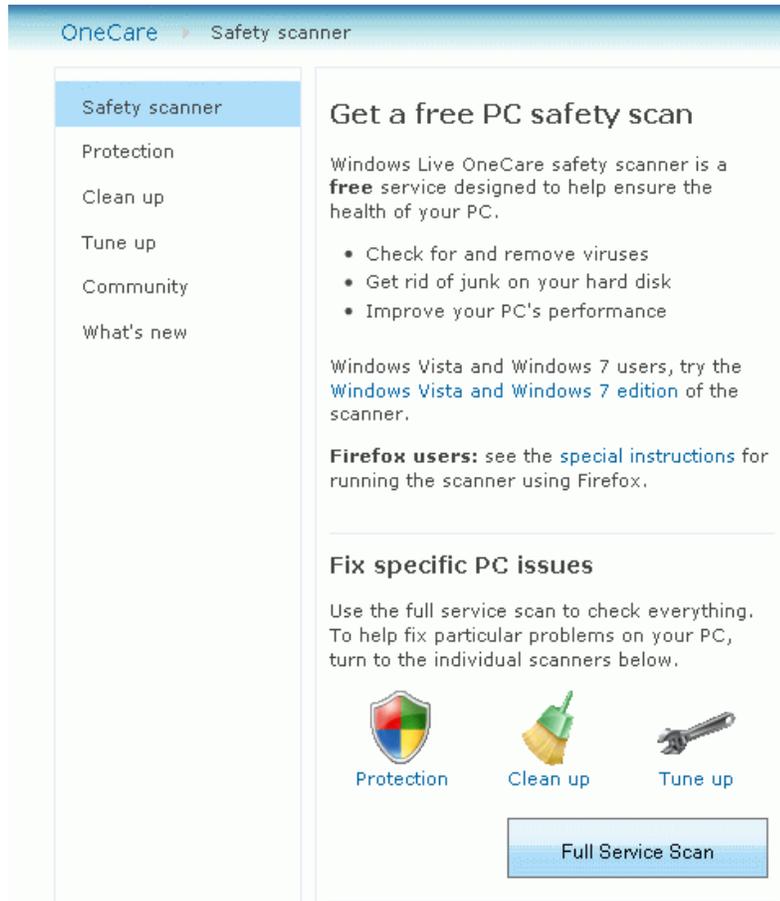
The screenshot shows the ESET website's navigation bar with the ESET logo, a shopping cart icon, and links for 'Company' and 'United States'. Below the navigation bar is a search bar with the placeholder text 'Type your question here...'. The main content area features a heading 'Get a FREE Online Virus Scan' and a sidebar with links: 'Online Scanner', 'New Features', 'Benefits', 'System Requirements', 'Help', and 'Frequently Asked Questions'. The main content area includes a green banner for 'ESET Online Scanner', a description of the tool, an 'IMPORTANT' note about administrator privileges, and a green button labeled 'ESET Online Scanner'.

It is browser based, and will run on Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0 or later, Firefox, Opera, Netscape, and Safari, and is implemented with a single mouse click. Only requiring a paltry 32mb of memory, ESET Online Scanner will run on Microsoft Windows 7, Vista, XP, 2000, and NT, and supports both 32 bit and 64 bit platforms. ESET Online Scanner uses a graphical user interface (GUI) that is intuitive and easy to use, and detects both known and unknown forms of malware, viruses, worms, Trojans, phishing and spyware. ESET performs a deep scan which also looks inside archived and packed files for malware. The user can select a full scan, or only selected files or folders. This scanner can detect and neutralize hidden rootkits, one of the latest and most difficult to detect types of threats. Rather than deleting infected files, all compromised files are moved to a quarantine folder where they no longer can threaten the security of the computer, but can be later repaired, restored, or deleted permanently. For those concerned with privacy, the scanner is used anonymously, and does not require any registration in order to use the free service. I have used the ESET Online Scanner several times, and found it to be a capable and effective free online scanner; it would be a good choice for anyone who wants to check his computer for all forms of malware, and remove anything that may have penetrated his existing security.

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Microsoft also offers a free online scanner, and being a Microsoft product, has a large and loyal following. Windows Live OneCare Safety Scanner is available at <http://onecare.live.com/site/en-us/default.htm>.



This online scanner uses many features that are in common with Microsoft's free full time security product, Microsoft Security Essentials. Windows Live OneCare Safety Scanner is a multi-function utility that can detect and remove malware, but also clean junk files on the hard drive, and tune up the computer, improving PC performance. Initiated by clicking on the "Full Service Scan" button, this utility is designed to "... help ensure the health of your PC."

While intended to be used with Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser, Microsoft has posted special instructions for using it with Firefox. Users of Firefox must install the free Firefox add-on "IETAB add-on" (link provided by Microsoft) which adds an Internet Explorer tab to Firefox that allows utilities designed explicitly for Internet Explorer to run on Firefox. There are also special versions of the Safety Scanner that are required for Vista and Windows 7, which are also linked from the Safety Scanner website.

For those who do not want to clean their hard drive, or tune up their computer, the Safety Scanner can selectively perform scans, including the "Protection Scan". To scan the computer for malware using the Safety Scanner, the user should go to <http://onecare.live.com/site/en-us/center/howsafe.htm> and click

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on "Protection Scan". The other scanners can also be individually selected from the menu on the left margin of the page. While not as sophisticated or as fast as some of the competing online scanners, Microsoft's Windows Live OneCare Safety Scanner is capable of detecting and removing most malware, and is a useful utility to check a computer for infection and clean whatever malware is detected.

Other free online scanners are available from Kaspersky, F-Secure, Panda Software, a-squared (Emsisoft), SUPERAntispyware, McAfee, Computer Associates (CA), and Comodo. While free, the Kaspersky and McAfee online scanners do not remove malware, only detect it, and require their respective paid versions to remove the malware so detected. The other products listed will all do a credible job of detecting and removing malware, and are viable alternatives to those discussed here.

An online scan is by no means a substitute for having a comprehensive, full-time, on demand security utility installed and frequently updated, which provides continuous security. The online scanners should be used to frequently check to see if security has been breached by malware, which is a good practice since the installed utilities can only detect about one-half of the total threats in circulation, but are typically quite good at protecting from the most common threats. Still, many of the contemporary threats are designed to penetrate traditional security defenses, or are so called "zero-day" threats that spread faster than the security companies can update their software. Since most online scanners utilize always updated cloud systems, they can provide a level of detection lacking in the installed scanners, and are a valuable adjunct to any security system.

Personally, I perform an online security scan with a variety of online scanners from providers other than the publisher of my installed security suite on a regular basis. I do this just to provide that little bit of an edge searching for threats that may have penetrated my layered and redundant security system. It would be a good idea for you to do the same. A little time invested now may save a lot of grief later.

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