

# BITS AND BYTES

November 2012

Newsletter of the Midland Computer Club

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

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

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

**This month's date:**  
**November 28, 2012**

**This month's topic:**  
**Joe Lykowski will show us some new  
technology items, a.k.a. holiday gift  
giving ideas.**

**What you missed!**  
At October meeting APCUG Advisor Greg  
West talked about what the **Association of  
Personal Computer User Groups** is and what  
benefits it offers our Club.

**Upcoming Activities:**  
**December - Club holiday party**  
**Note: December meeting is the third  
Wednesday - December 19th.**

**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

"We have met the enemy, and he is  
us." Pogo, by [Walt Kelly](#). A fitting  
remark when first written in the '60s,  
but now days it seems we seek  
answers outside ourselves.



Windows 8 falls into this category. It  
is different. It is not a better, more efficient  
computing system for those of us who grew up with  
a typewriter and later a keyboard, and who still must  
turn out content, be it books, newsletters, articles or  
just a well written email. (The recent election  
referred to 'makers and takers'; I consider myself in  
the shrinking market of makers when it comes to  
computer content.) We still get our information from  
either the TV or a printed copy we can hold in our  
hands. We communicate with either the phone or  
email. We do not feel any urge to be always  
available or always connected.

Windows 8 takes advantage of the growing market  
who really need only to check email and social  
media. The need for a 'full featured' computer that  
fully renders graphics, be it for Photoshop or gaming  
needs, was always a small percentage of buyers.  
Now the market has split into numerous devices that  
are more mobile, cheaper and targeted at this new  
audience.

So what does the present computer user do about  
Windows 8? Probably nothing for now. When you  
need another 'real' computer, you will be forced, of  
course, to buy a Windows 8 version, at least from  
the traditional stores. But you can continue to use  
the older OS and the currently installed programs for  
the foreseeable future.

It is amazing how many businesses and universities  
still have computer labs stocked with Windows XP.

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**BOARD MEMBER**

Shirley Salas

**PUBLICITY**

Al Adams aladams12@yahoo.com

**Board Meeting**

Thursday, January 3, 2013  
 7:00 PM  
 Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church,  
 5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland MI

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

<http://cubby.com>

Another Cloud storage option. It has 5G free and an intuitive interface.

[http://download.cnet.com/IrfanView/3000-2192\\_4-10021962.html?tag=api&tag=nl.t700&s\\_cid=t700](http://download.cnet.com/IrfanView/3000-2192_4-10021962.html?tag=api&tag=nl.t700&s_cid=t700)

Irfanview, a freeware image editor. One of the best.

<http://www.accountkiller.com/en/>

Referenced by Kim Komando, it tells one how difficult it will be to delete yourself from certain social media websites

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

Did you know that Free Shipping Day is December 17? Over a thousand online sites are expected to participate this year.

<http://www.stateintegrity.org/>

Transparency ratings for all of the state governments.

[www.cipa.com/verify-pharmacy](http://www.cipa.com/verify-pharmacy)

If you are contemplating buying prescription drugs from a Canadian site, check here to see if they are members of the Canadian International Pharmacy Association.

[www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov)

Log any email scams that your receive on this site.

**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

**Piper's Ponderings** (continued from Page 1)

Other options include: buying a kit and installing the OS of your choice, buying a new computer and removing Win 8 so you can install Win 7, going to any of the popular Linux OS systems or going with an Apple computer. All these options will retain the 'traditional' keyboard/mouse interface, as well as familiar programs.

So, even though we are the enemy, we still have plenty of options. We are not being forced to buy/learn a new OS. The sun will rise tomorrow. Our lives will not be seriously affected one way or another.

*(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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**Tips, Tricks & Techniques** (submitted by Howard Lewis)**Improve Your Laptop's Power Efficiency**

If you have a laptop, you may be able to improve its battery life by running `powercfg`. To accomplish this:

1. Go to *Start* and type `cmd` into the **Search** box.
2. When the `cmd` icon appears in the programs list, right-click on it and choose *Run as administrator*.
3. Once the **Command Prompt** dialog box appears, type in `powercfg -energy` and press *Return*.
4. Your computer will run a sixty second analysis on your computer and generate an HTML file with a list of energy related comments, issues and suggestions on how to more efficiently configure your computer to reduce energy consumption.
5. Note: If no location is specified, the default file location is `c:\windows\system32`. If you are not running Windows 7 as an administrator, you will need to either copy the resultant file to your desktop or use the **Output** parameter to specify the path to your desktop (i.e., `powercfg -energy -output c:\users\userid\desktop\power_report.html`).
6. Using **Windows Explorer**, navigate to the location specified and double-click on the file.

**Pin a Drive to the Taskbar**

If you frequently go to a specific drive or folder via Windows Explorer, you can place a direct link to that location on your Taskbar.

1. Right-click on the *desktop* and select *New/Text Document*.
2. Rename the document `drive.exe`.
3. Drag and drop this icon onto the taskbar and delete the original file.
4. Right-click the new button on the taskbar and then right-click on `drive` and select *Properties*.
5. Change both the *Target* and *Start In* boxes to point to the drive/folder that you wish.
6. You may also want to *Change Icon* to a more meaningful icon.

**Change the Default Search in Firefox**

Firefox defaults it's search engine to Google. If you would prefer to use a different default:

1. Type `about.config` in your address bar (you will get a warning message to proceed with caution).
2. In the **Search** box type `browser.search.defaultenginename`
3. Double-click that entry and then type in the name of the search engine you wish to use as your default. The search engine must have already been installed on your computer. Be sure you spell the name correctly. Bing, Google and Yahoo worked on my computer.
4. *Restart Firefox*.

Now you will see your favorite search engine displayed

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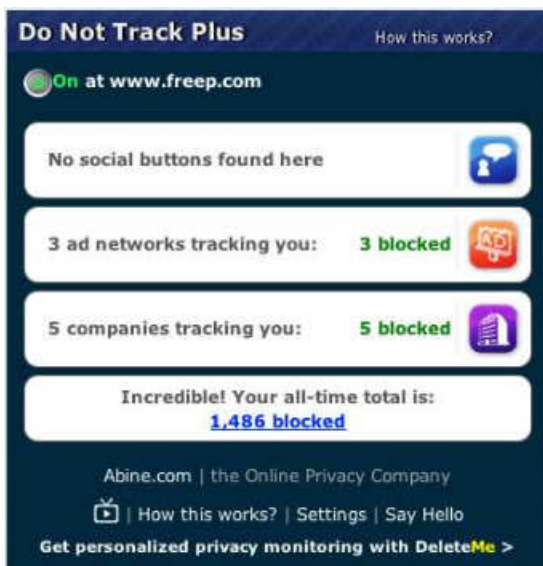
StaySafeOnline.org

*Articles in this Newsletter have been obtained from APCUG with the authors' permission for publication by APCUG member groups. The Midland Computer Club has not verified the information contained in the articles nor tested procedures or hardware/software. Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the Midland Computer Club.*

## **Do Not Track Plus by Abine.com**

Reviewed by Larry Mobbs, President, Computer Operators of Marysville and Port Huron, MI  
March 2012 issue, COMP Communicator, www.bwcomp.org, lmobbs (at) comcast.net

A new program offered free from Abine software allows you to block websites you visit from tracking where you browse. Many sites, and Facebook.com is one of the worst, want to track every site you visit so they can match up your preferences to the items they want to display on you wall for advertisers.



In the software industry there is a movement to have the browsers include a plugin that prevents this action but as of yet it is not ordered and may never be. Browser publishers may take this on from their own volition but they will be pressured by advertisers not to.



One must remember that many sites depend on you or others visiting the links they place on their pages in order to pay for the website.

When you run Abine it puts a small icon in your browser and it displays a number with each site you visit, telling you how many attempts are made to track your visit and what type of tracking company is making the effort. They also keep a running grand total of how many blocks they have made. In the first few days of my use on one machine they blocked 1600 attempts.

Installation following the quick download is painless and there is virtually no setup. While writing this article I loaded Firefox, downloaded the software and ran it as a plugin.

This is required for each browser you use. After restarting Firefox I visited cnn.com and Donottrack Plus reported blocking 13 attempts to track my browsing on their site.

It looked like this (see right).

The program came highly recommended by Cnet.com, which is where I read about it. It can be downloaded from Abine.com.



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## Make Hard to Break, Yet Easy to Remember Passwords

By Doris Collins, Member, ccOKC (Computer Club of Oklahoma City)  
May 2012 Issue, eMonitor, www.ccokc.org. DJCollins1122 (at) aol.com

We all know that simple passwords are dangerous. If you're using any of the following for passwords (or forms thereof), you probably aren't as secure as you think:

- Names of Pets
- Birth date
- Last 4 digits of your SS#
- Kid's Names
- Grandkid's Names
- Parent's Names
- Addresses
- Phone Numbers
- The word Password

Did I catch you? Well, it gets even worse!

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Even if you're not using any of the above, but are still using simple words (like car, bike, etc.) for your passwords, you're accounts are still pretty easy to break into. Now, a better password looks more like this:

ks86jw03ts92ctb02

Although some would argue that it's not better than what most people have been using thus far. Yeah, yeah, I know what you're thinking, "How the heck am I supposed to remember that thing? It's 17 random letters and numbers!" Read on. That password is as easy to remember as any other - if you understand how it was constructed:

It's based on a fictitious Smith family with a daughter named Kelly and a son named Tyler. They have a 2003 Jeep Wrangler and an 02 Chevy Trail Blazer. Now, let's take those facts and look at the password again:

- ks86 - Kelly Smith, born in 1986
- jw03 - Jeep Wrangler, 2003 model
- ts92 - Tyler Smith, born in 1992
- ctb02 - You guessed it, Chevy Trail Blazer 2002 model year

I simply took the first initials of everyone and everything involved, then the year they were born (or built). It's a lot tougher to guess a password like that, but still very easy to remember.

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## **Book Review - Focus on Lighting Photos**

By Rosemary Lloyd, President, Big Bear Computer Club, CA  
[www.bigbearcc.org](http://www.bigbearcc.org), [rosemary \(at\) sugarloafpc.com](mailto:rosemary@bigbearcc.org)

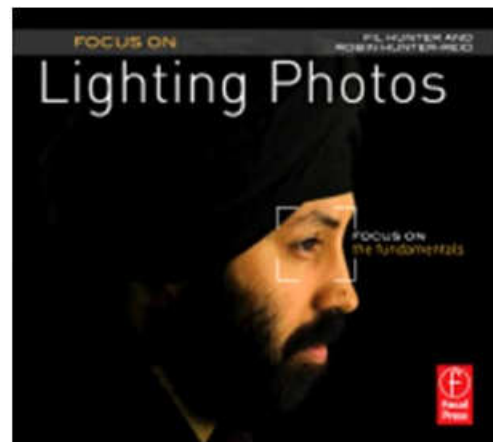
Excellent photographs gain much of their impact from the way the subject is lit. Focus on Lighting Photos is a unique how-to book that includes many pictures and diagrams. It demonstrates how light can be used to create the mood that the photographer wants to project. This is the latest of six books in the 'Focus on' series about photography.

The first half of the book looks at different methods of putting light on the subject. Different ways of controlling the direction, intensity and color of the light are thoroughly covered.

The explanations are easy to understand. Concepts are demonstrated by series of photos of the same subject with different lighting. Diagrams supplement the written explanations. I find the use of progressively more intriguingly lighted pictures, of the same subject, very helpful. That technique enabled me to understand concepts better.

In the latter part of the book, the authors focus on methods for lighting diverse subjects. They deal with people, metal, glass and motion. The chapter on lighting for portraits goes into some detail on types of equipment.

They discuss how to make some of the tools yourself.



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The target audience is hobbyists. Fil and Robin emphasize that you do not need to spend a lot of money on photo equipment. Once you have a camera and a flash, you can shoot fine photographs with only a few other tools. In fact, they recommend borrowing or making your own items until you find yourself using them enough to justify buying.

Focus on Lighting Photos seems to be geared for readers who are somewhat familiar with photography in general. I would say intermediate level. However, there is a very good glossary of the photo terms used. If you have not taken a photo class, it is fairly easy to follow along.

The writing style is informal, clear and precise. I really enjoyed Focus on Lighting Photos. The techniques it presents are exciting and inspiring. It is a fairly easy read.

Focus on Lighting Photos  
Hunter, Fil and Reid, Robin  
Focal Press, 2011, 200 pages  
\$19.95, ISBN 978-0-240-81711-8  
User Group Discount 40%

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## **Software Review: Microsoft OneNote, an All-Purpose Planner**

By Nancy DeMarte, Regular Columnist (Office Talk), Sarasota PCUG, Florida  
May 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor, [www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org), [ndemarte \(at\) Verizon.net](mailto:ndemarte@verizon.net)



If you purchased a recent home version of MS Office, which includes the programs, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, you also got a lesser known program called OneNote (file extension *.one*). OneNote was created in 2002, and has been a part of some versions of the Office suite since Office 2003. It was, however, a long time before I even opened this program. It was described as being good for “note-keeping and sharing,” which weren’t activities I commonly did on my computer. It was only recently that I decided to find out what OneNote was all about. I was pleasantly surprised. Read on to find out why.

### **Adding Information to a Notebook**

OneNote lets you create notes, gather information, and organize it all using a simple system modeled after a ring binder. You open a new Notebook, add Sections, indicated by tabs, and insert Pages within the sections. You can type notes anywhere on a page. Each ‘note’ will be in its own “note container,” somewhat like a text box, which you can move, resize or merge with other notes. This basic feature makes the program popular with college students who use it to take lecture notes. You can also add items from the web or files from your computer. To capture a portion of a web page, for example, you highlight the section, click ‘Insert Screen Clipping,’ and the web section appears on the OneNote page. Besides text, you can copy and paste photos, drawings, or any file from your computer such as a document or spreadsheet. PowerPoint slide shows appear as printouts. You can create audio or video recordings of meetings or interviews directly in OneNote. One Note saves your work continuously and automatically so nothing is lost. It also keeps a backup copy on your computer or online.

### **Organizing a Notebook**

OneNote gives the user many options for organizing notebooks. These range from practically random to highly structured layouts. You can expand the page size, add, rename, and reorganize pages any time. Page and whole notebook templates are available at the MS website to help with layout of the OneNote content. Just looking through the templates gave me ideas on uses for One Note. Interesting template

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topics I found included landscape planning, preparing for a residential move, a family reunion organizer, and a cookbook. Practical page designs included address and phone lists, to-do lists, and a health history chart. Just like in Word, you can design your own notebook layout and save it as a template.

To find out how OneNote works, I decided to use it to plan a fall cruise/land tour vacation in the New England – Eastern Canada region. First I opened OneNote and displayed the Ribbon by clicking the small arrow next to the Help icon. The ribbon is not displayed by default, but contains all the commands and editing tools. Then I opened a new Notebook (File – New) and named it Canadian Cruise. Once I recognized that the Tabs along the top of the notebook indicated Sections and that I could name them and add as many pages as I wanted, I created a few section Tabs to get started: Cruise Itineraries, Land Tours, Budget, and a To Do List complete with checkboxes to keep track of my planning tasks.

In the Cruise Itineraries section, I created three pages. On my Cruise Lines page, I added my favorite cruise lines with contact information and website addresses, each which appears as a hyperlink. Pressing the Tab key after each bit of information automatically creates a table. Pressing Enter adds a new row. On the Ports to Visit page, I listed those stops we wanted to make, knowing I could add more detail later. My last page, Itineraries, was my first experiment in gathering research material into OneNote. Using Insert – Screen Clipping, I captured a specific itinerary offered by Norwegian Cruise Lines which listed dates, times, ports, and a map of the trip. I typed a few notes to accompany this snip, such as the cost of a balcony cabin, and dragged them onto a corner of the map. Then I added a larger map of the New England and Canadian Maritimes area from Google Maps. I did the same sort of captures for two other cruise lines and pasted them in below the first. I noticed that my pages expanded as needed.

### **Sharing a Notebook**

At this point I decided to share my Notebook with our Kentucky friends who often travel with us and might be enticed to accompany us on this trip. I logged in to my SkyDrive page ([skydrive.live.com](http://skydrive.live.com)), the Microsoft cloud storage location. I also have a copy of this notebook saved on my computer. (Another option for sharing would have been Dropbox, a free program for file-sharing.) My friends already have access to one folder on my SkyDrive site so adding a new folder was easy. I uploaded my Canadian Cruise OneNote notebook to SkyDrive, adjusted the permissions to let my friends view it, and then notified them by email. It is also possible in OneNote 2010 to create shared notebooks which can be edited by more than one person at the same time. I saved that for another day.

My final step was to add the free OneNote app to my iPad so I could synchronize my work between devices. OneNote has free apps for many mobile devices, including Android cell phones and tablets as well as iPhones, iPads, and Windows phones. It can be synchronized across devices – PC's, laptops, and mobiles – using Live Mesh, a free syncing program from Microsoft. If you don't have MS Office, the stand alone OneNote program can be purchased from Microsoft for about \$80. If you do own MS Office, certainly try OneNote. It is easy to learn and amazingly flexible.

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### **Parted Magic**

By Dick Maybach, April 2012 issue, BUG Bytes, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ  
[www.bcug.com](http://www.bcug.com), [n2nd \(at\) charter.net](mailto:n2nd@charter.net)

Although modern operating systems are robust, sometimes they need maintenance, either to repair problems or because we want to make changes. And many times the things we want to do are not possible within the operating system, either because the tools aren't available or because the operations can't take place while the system is live. One solution is to use a live-CD, which is an operating system that boots directly from a CD-ROM or a USB memory stick and doesn't use the hard disk at all. This has

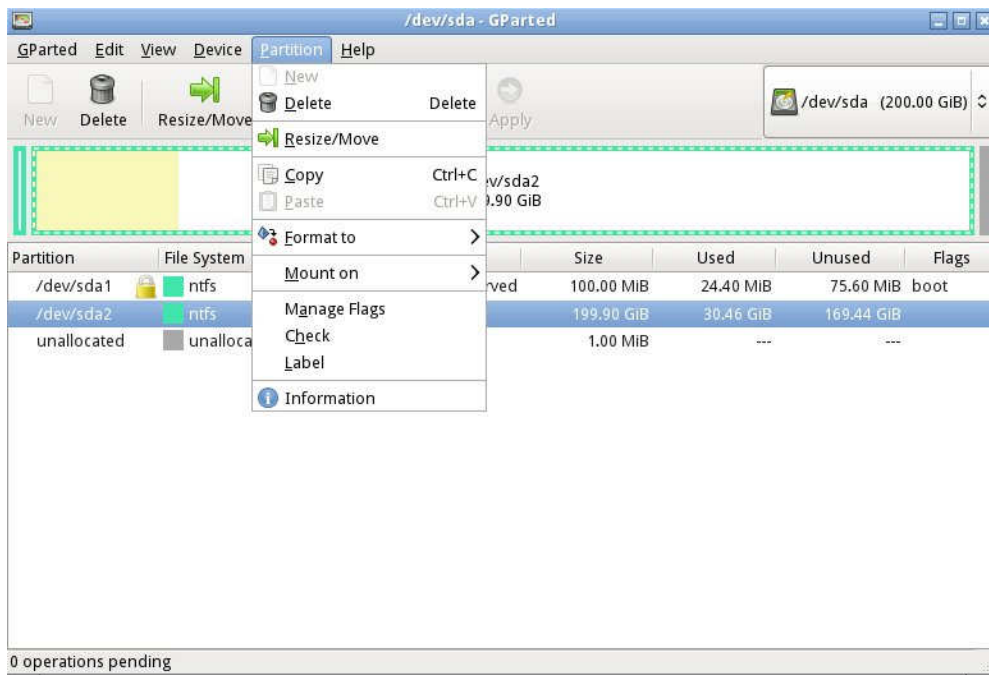
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the advantage that you can perform any operation you like on the dormant hard disk. The situation is similar to doing an autopsy. Doing the same thing in an operating system that is running from the hard disk is like trying to operate on a patient who is awake. My current favorite maintenance tool is Parted Magic, <http://www.partedmagic.com>. which is small enough (187 Mbytes) to fit comfortably on a CD-ROM or a USB memory stick. See the Web page for instructions on how to create either.

Parted Magic requires a computer with at least an Intel PII compatible processor and 175MB of RAM, although it will run much faster if there are 400 MB or more. You will have problems if your computer has peripherals that need proprietary drivers, for example, some wireless keyboards and mice. As it boots, you will be asked a couple of questions, but I've found that accepting the defaults works, then you will see the screen below.



A few tools appear as desktop icons, but most are in menus that you can access through the start button in the lower left corner. To its right are icons to mount devices, use the command line, get help, and switch between desktops. At the far right of the menu bar are icons for the network status, sound volume, and clock. The display on the right of the main screen shows the load on the PC, CPU and RAM usage, as well as the programs that are using the most processor and RAM resources. Two of the tools on the desktop are particularly useful: the File Manager and the Partition Editor (GParted). The screenshot to the right shows the latter in operation.



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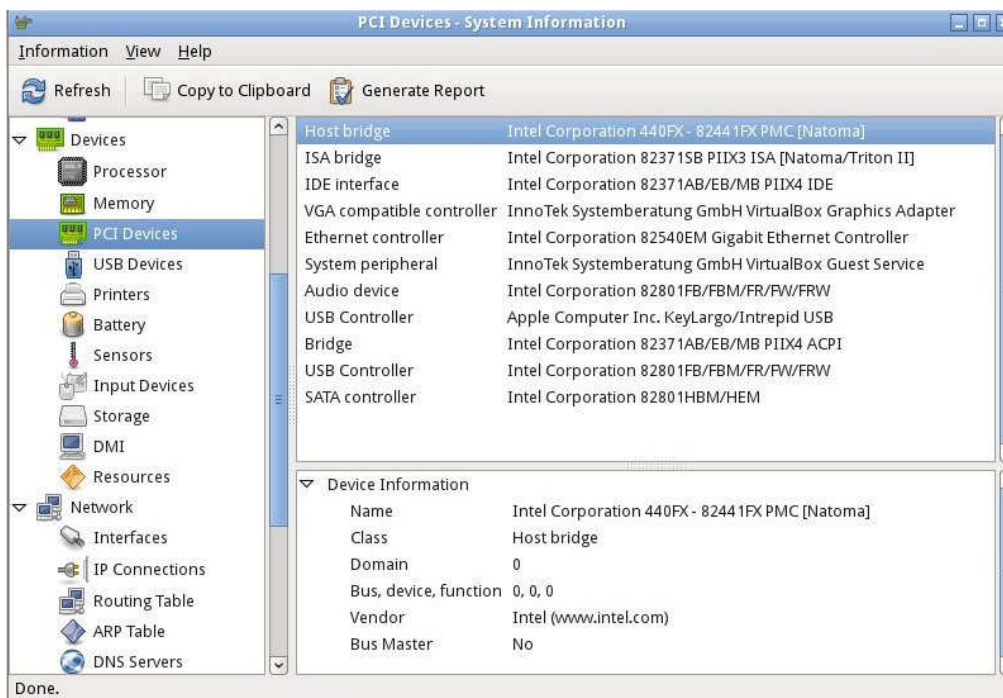
(Continued from page 9)

Here we've selected an NTFS partition, which (among other things) we could resize. GParted can operate on Microsoft, Apple, and Linux partitions. Other partition tools allow you to create a file containing an image of an entire partition or to clone a disk, copy everything on a disk to different one (usually done when you want to replace your hard disk with a larger one). An important tool that few people use is one that securely erases a hard disk. You should always do this before disposing of a PC, since deleting files and even partitions does not really remove the information. A determined person, with a lot a time could recover your passwords and other sensitive data. (See the next paragraph.)

There are many tools to recover deleted files, rescue files from damaged disks, and replace boot loaders and boot records, but only for Linux and Microsoft file systems. Some of these are quite specialized, and it will take some study to determine the best one for each case. Many are called from the command-line, which means further study before you can use them effectively. Since all the documentation is on-line, using Parted Magic requires Internet access. Be careful, especially when trying to correct serious problems; the safe approach here is to clone the disk and perform the surgery on the copy. There is also a virus detector, but it detects only; it can't disinfect files.

An important program is *chntpw*, which resets Windows passwords. It's not uncommon for people to forget their passwords, which locks them out of their own PCs; I've done this myself. The safe way to use this is to remove the password completely, and then log back into Windows to set a new one. Note that some of the upper-end Windows versions include the ability to encrypt files and folders and resetting their passwords will render these unreadable. If you need only to recover a few files, you needn't reset the password. All of Windows' files are accessible from Parted Magic, unless they've been encrypted; just copy them onto a different medium. (Keep this in mind before you leave your laptop alone.) A similar program, *cmospwd*, recovers CMOS setup passwords, which can be helpful for dealing with used PCs. By the way, you don't need special tools to reset Linux passwords, which you can do from the command line with standard commands.

Also included are programs to identify, benchmark, and test the hardware, including comprehensive RAM and disk tests. The screenshot below shows the peripheral devices (top) and details on the Host bridge (bottom). You can learn a lot about your PC just by poking about (and, of course, searching the Internet for what the terms mean).



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I recently gave my 10- and 11-year-old grandchildren netbooks. The computers came with Windows 7 installed, but I wanted to install Linux, because there are many educational programs for it and because it's much more resistant to malware. (My 9 year-old grandson, at the advice of one of his friends, installed a free game on his mother's laptop, and it took her a lot of effort to remove the free virus that was included. I'd like him to survive to see 10.) The netbooks had 350-GByte hard disks, so there was plenty of room for both Windows and Linux. It would have been easy to replace Windows with Linux, but the genes I inherited from my Scotch grandmother wouldn't let me delete the Windows I had paid for. Since the netbooks have no CD/DVD drive, I installed Parted Magic on a USB memory stick and used GParted to reduce the Windows partition to 100 GBytes, leaving 200 GBytes for Linux; the remaining 50 GBytes is for a recovery partition. After configuring Windows and installing Linux, I made images of both partitions using the command-line program fsarchiver. (There are several partition imaging tools available, but this one was the best for my use, because it could handle both NTFS and Linux file systems.)

For another example, a friend's son, by downloading pirated songs, infected his folks' PC to the extent that it wouldn't boot. Booting Parted Magic and using the ClamAV anti-virus tool I identified the infected song files, but Windows was hopelessly corrupted. I was able to move all the user data onto an external disk, so after the PC was restored to its as-delivered state, I could restore the data (minus the infected songs), thus converting a disaster into a nuisance.

If you're reading this, you probably serve as the computer support person for your friends and family. Parted Magic provides many tools to help you do this, but it's up to you to learn how to use them.

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## **The Transitional Operating System**

By Berry F. Phillips, Member, ccOKC (Computer Club of Oklahoma City)  
May 2012 issue, eMonitor, [www.ccokc.org](http://www.ccokc.org), [wjames \(at\) sbcglobal.net](mailto:wjames@sbcglobal.net)

The Operating System (OS) is the most important piece of software on your computer. From a user perspective, the OS provides the interface with which the users interact. Behind the scenes, an operating system carries out many additional functions. The OS recognizes drives and communicates between applications and the processor. The OS manages a directory of files, and manages resources such as fonts and system sounds. Without the operating system nothing happens! In this article we will explore what we can expect from operating systems of the future.

When the OS evolved from command-line interfaces to graphical user interfaces, many tasks that computer users routinely carried out became much easier and user friendly. The graphical user interface or GUIs made possible by the invention of Xerox PARC was the major step toward making the computers accessible to the average computer user not just computer geeks.

In recent years, the standard GUI began to show signs of age. Hardware and software have become increasingly complex. To the rescue, came the wizard--a simple piece of software that converts complicated tasks into an automated procedure. In the future, you can expect to see more wizards incorporated into operating systems.

As various kinds of media were formerly separate -- such as mail, television, radio, and telephony -- converge on the desktop, expect operating systems to evolve to deal with these seamlessly. Operating systems in the future will easily operate these multiple systems which will be merged with the operating systems in the future.

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The ideal OS is one that we never have to think about. It will function as an obedient Victorian era servant who knows our wishes better than we do. We will see voice activation and instruction continue to develop and be integrated into future operating systems. Jeeves, our OS butler, may well take care of most of our commands.

I am speaking to my OS, "Write me an article for the Computer Hysteria column for the eMonitor." Nothing is happening. Well, if my OS cannot do that I will try something else. "Fix my supper and clean my apartment!" Nothing is happening. I guess I will have to wait for future developments of the operating system.

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## Social Networks

StaySafeOnline.org

Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn and other social networks have become an integral part of online lives. Social networks are a great way to stay connected with others, but you should be wary about how much personal information you post.

Have your family follow these tips to safely enjoy social networking:

- Privacy and security settings exist for a reason: Learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks. They are there to help you control who sees what you post and manage your online experience in a positive way.
- Once posted, always posted: Protect your reputation on social networks. What you post online stays online. Think twice before posting pictures you wouldn't want your parents or future employers to see. Recent research (<http://www.microsoft.com/privacy/dpd/research.aspx>) found that 70% of job recruiters rejected candidates based on information they found online.
- Your online reputation can be a good thing: Recent research (<http://www.microsoft.com/privacy/dpd/research.aspx>) also found that recruiters respond to a strong, positive personal brand online. So show your smarts, thoughtfulness, and mastery of the environment.
- Keep personal info personal: Be cautious about how much personal information you provide on social networking sites. The more information you post, the easier it may be for a hacker or someone else to use that information to steal your identity, access your data, or commit other crimes such as stalking.
- Know and manage your friends: Social networks can be used for a variety of purposes. Some of the fun is creating a large pool of friends from many aspects of your life. That doesn't mean all friends are created equal. Use tools to manage the information you share with friends in different groups or even have multiple online pages. If you're trying to create a public persona as a blogger or expert, create an open profile or a "fan" page that encourages broad participation and limits personal information. Use your personal profile to keep your real friends (the ones you know trust) more synched up with your daily life.
- Be honest if you're uncomfortable: If a friend posts something about you that makes you uncomfortable or you think is inappropriate, let them know. Likewise, stay open-minded if a friend approaches you because something you've posted makes him or her uncomfortable. People have different tolerances for how much the world knows about them respect those differences. Know what action to take: If someone is harassing or threatening you, remove them from your friends list, block them, and report them to the site administrator.

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Protect Yourself with these STOP. THINK. CONNECT. Tips:

- Keep a clean machine: Having the latest security software, web browser, and operating system are the best defenses against viruses, malware, and other online threats.
  - Own your online presence: When applicable, set the privacy and security settings on websites to your comfort level for information sharing. It's ok to limit how you share information.
  - Make passwords long and strong: Combine capital and lowercase letters with numbers and symbols to create a more secure password.
  - Unique account, unique password: Separate passwords for every account helps to thwart cybercriminals.
  - When in doubt, throw it out: Links in email, tweets, posts, and online advertising are often the way cybercriminals compromise your computer. If it looks suspicious, even if you know the source, it's best to delete or if appropriate, mark as junk email.
  - Post only about others as you have them post about you.
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