BITS AND BYTES

February 2016

Midland Computer Club — Midland Michigan

President Piper's Ponderings....

February's General Meeting will be short subjects. Right now we have four topics, each about 10-15 minutes long.

Al will be talking about battery replacement in an Android tablet. He also will tell us about "side loading" apps on a Kindle. Carol will speak on alternatives to Charter TV. I will be making some comments about upgrading to Win 10 and how to turn off the upgrade nag.

The Board has discussed some possible future topics like Office 2016, OneNote, Kangaroo PC, Win 10 restores and Kali Linux. We also want to experiment with an online topic. Let me know if you have any meeting preferences or any other ideas.

Because I am involved with multiple PC systems and multiple PC "customers" who do not want to upgrade to Win 10, I have been discussing with others what are my options as we approach the magical date of July 29, 2016. This will be the one year anniversary of the release of Win 10. An implied option is that Win 10 may no longer be free after this date. So what do you do to protect your options? One answer is an image backup, both of an existing Win 7 and an updated Win 10, both on the same PC. If you have two image backups, it lets you "have your cake and eat it too". This looks like a potential topic for a future meeting.

Charter has made some changes to its home page. It has also made a policy change of contacting you when you change passwords. This is probably a good thing, but I find scammers are already trying to exploit this "personal" contact scheme.

See you Wednesday, Feb 24.

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

GENERAL CLUB MEETING
Midland Community Center, 2205 S Jefferson Ave, Midland MI
Room K111, Barstow Shipps Wing

Wednesday, February 24, 2016
7:00 P.M.
Topic: Several short topics will be presented

2016 BOARD MEMBERS

MCC OFFICERS

President	Larry Piper	larryp56@chartermi.net
Treasurer	Jan Ensing	btiger6@yahoo.com
Membership	Gary Ensing	btiger6@gmail.com
Editor & Webmaster	Carol Picard	webbyte@yahoo.com

AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBER

Joe Lykowski   joseph@lykowski.com

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.

PUBLICITY

Al Adams   aladams12@yahoo.com

Board Meeting

First Thursday of the month
7:00 PM
Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church,
5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland MI

Educational, Fun, and Interesting Web Sites: (submitted by Howard Lewis)

http://www.ispot.tv/
Companies spend a lot of money on their TV ads. This site provides these companies a way to analyze the effectiveness of those ads. You can see who is spending the most on TV ads and the effectiveness of the ads.

http://bit.ly/1OTrxxs
Do those codes on your medical insurance statements confuse you? This site (run by the American Medical Association) will try to help you understand those codes).

https://www.lowestmed.com/
Find the lowest prices on your medications in your area.

http://www.airfarewatchdog.com/
Find the lowest airfare for your next trip.

http://bit.ly/1KlVzc6
The Associated Press YouTube Channel offers over 1.7 million global news and entertainment video stories dating back to 1895.

http://scitechdaily.com/
Get your daily fill of tech news from this website.

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**
       1816 Bauss Ct
       Midland, MI 48642-4023

                You may also pay for membership at a regular club meeting

Tips, Tricks & Techniques: (submitted by Carol Picard)

Last month's Tips covered system-wide settings that I review/customize when setting up a new computer. Following are user-specific settings to review/customize.

USER SPECIFIC SETTINGS – log on to each user account to change these settings

Manage default printer
Windows will automatically set last used printer as default printer. To keep a specific printer set as default:
    Windows logo icon or tap Windows logo key
    Settings
    Devices
    scroll down
    under Let Windows Manage my default printer, toggle Off

    if printer you want as default doesn't have the word Default under printer name
        click name of printer you want as default
        Set as default

AutoPlay – if you insert a removable drive or memory card that has pictures, they may be automatically copied to the computer. To change that behavior:
    search for auto
    AutoPlay settings
        for Removable drive
            set to: Open folder to view files (File Explorer)
        for Memory card
            set to: Open folder to view files (File Explorer)

Search box in task bar - change to search icon so it takes up less room on task bar
    right click anywhere on task bar
    position mouse pointer over Search
    in pop out Menu, click to select appropriate option
        Hidden
        Show Search icon
        Show search box

Turn off WiFi Sense
Windows logo icon or tap Windows logo key
Settings
Network & Internet
scroll to and click Manage Wi-Fi settings
Connect to suggested open hotspots, toggle: Off
Connect to networks shared by my contacts, toggle: Off
Paid Wi-Fi services, toggle: Off

Privacy Settings
Windows logo icon or tap Windows logo key
Settings
Privacy
review settings under each category and disable anything that you don't want
if change requires administrative approval, will be prompted for administrator username/password

Tips, Tricks & Techniques: (cont.)

Turn off Start Menu ads
Windows logo icon or tap Windows logo key
Settings
Personalization
Start
Occasionally show suggestions in Start, toggle: Off

Widen area available for tiles on Start Menu
Windows logo icon or tap Windows logo key
Settings
Personalization
Start
Show more tiles, toggle: Off

ARTICLE INDEX

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.

Drive for Change - Installing a Laptop Hybrid Drive
By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood UG, CA
June 2015 issue, Drive Light   www.uchug.org   president (at) uchug. org

Like people, computers have a lifecycle. That lifecycle typically takes them from a youth of peak capabilities, through a middle age marked by a slowing down and perhaps reduced desirability to twilight years of diminished capacities, failing parts and obsolescence in the workforce. If your laptop is in the midst of a mid-life crisis, there are things you can do to turn back the clock and return a bit of that youthful capability and desirability.

I have a couple of laptops that are now three years old and don't seem as quick and capable as when I bought them. I buy on a value budget, so both the Fujitsu Lifebook LH531 for me and Lifebook AH531 for my wife were mid-priced computers bought on sale. Both had decent processors, Windows 7, adequate

but not expansive RAM and hard drives and the typical interfaces of the 2011 computer era. They now seem a bit slower, are running out of storage space and don't have some of the new, faster interfaces to match my new accessories (like USB3). Should I continue to use them as they continue to slowly degrade, buy updated new replacements or upgrade them to add increased life and utility?

Fortunately, improvements in technology have led to falling prices in RAM and mass storage since I bought these laptops. I recently changed their RAM, doubling the amount in them from the original 2 GB, for a lot less than I probably would have paid for more memory three years ago. Now I'm looking at changing the 500 GB hard drives they came with to larger and/or faster mass storage.

It seems to me that these are constants in the computer user experience:
- You can always use more storage space
- The computer can always be faster

As luck would have it, available sizes for hard drives have been steadily increasing over the years as the-per unit cost of storage has been falling. In addition to magnetic spinning platter drives, solid-state drives (SSDs) are now available; these have much faster access times and can greatly decrease boot times and improve the performance of storage-intensive computer activities. Like hard drives, SSDs have also increased in size and dropped in price over the years. Unfortunately, the price drops have been proportional, so as SSD costs have come down to make them more attractive, so too have hard drive prices, so the choice for me has not been an easy one. Increasing my storage to a 1 TB hard drive in these laptops would now cost only about $60 each, but a 1 TB SSD is currently around $300. I could speed things up with a 240 GB SSD for around $100, but would then have less than half the storage space I have now. It does not look like SSD prices are going to drop dramatically compared to magnetic hard drives and put them out of business anytime soon.

A new class of mass storage promises to provide the best of both worlds - large storage at a low cost, with much faster access times. It is called the hybrid drive or solid-state hard drive (SSHD), and it combines a magnetic platter hard drive and solid-state Flash memory in one device. With the addition of 8 GB of NAND Flash to the hard drive's controller card, the most often accessed data is stored in the solid-state memory, reducing access times for a lot of critical disk operations. Now two of the three hard drive manufacturers, Toshiba and Seagate, offer these hybrid drives (so far Western Digital does not). Seagate claims their SSHD can boot in 22 seconds, when compared to an HDD (hard disk drive) boot of 37 seconds and an SSD boot of 21 seconds. A 1 TB hybrid or SSHD is currently available for around $80, which is not much more than an HDD, but a lot less than an SSD of the same size.

For my wife's laptop, I recently installed a Toshiba MQ01ABD100H 1 TB hybrid drive. It doubled the storage space, while reducing the boot time from 90 seconds to 33 seconds on average. For my LH531 laptop, I'm choosing a Seagate ST1000LM014 1 TB hybrid drive. The process I used to change drives was:

1) Clean up the old drive. There is no sense in copying temp files, out of date applications or malware to the new drive. After running my anti-virus and anti-malware software and updating my operating system and important applications, I also defragmented the old hard drive.

2) Back up the old drive. There are several ways to copy the data from the old drive to the new drive, including connecting the new bare drive to the computer through an adapter and running drive cloning software. I chose to instead make an image backup of my old drive to an external USB hard drive, and then later restore to the new drive after swapping them.

3) Remove the old drive and replace with the new bare drive. This is fairly easy on most laptops, though you do need to take care to avoid damaging the drive and computer from a static discharge.

4) Restore the image backup to the new hard drive. With no operating system on the new drive initially, your backup program must be able to be booted from an external drive (a CD, USB or network drive).

5) Adjust the restored partition(s) on the new drive to take advantage of the additional space, if necessary.

The nice thing about this transfer method is that it is low risk - the original hard drive can always be installed back in the laptop should something go wrong in the transfer process.

I use Acronis True Image backup software, and so used it to make my image backup files for the transfers. Though True Image may be installed on the hard drive, it may also be run from the program CD, as the CD is bootable.

I always run True Image from the bootable CD as I want to be familiar with the way I would need to run it if I ever had a hard drive failure. Though I buy the new version of True Image each year (the latest is True Image 2015), I typically continue to use the older versions on my old computers, as I'm more familiar with the user interface. I found I had to move up to True Image 2014 when restoring to the hybrid drive in my wife's laptop, as the 2011 version I used to make the backup image did not recognize the hybrid drive.

Note that I tried unsuccessfully to use True Image 2015 for the restore; I found this latest version did not recognize the external USB drive containing my backup file. True Image has had extensive and useful support for external and network drives in their previous versions; it appears Acronis may have traded that for cloud storage capabilities in their latest version.

While True Image can back up and restore individual files and folders, its main advantage over other backup programs is in making image backups of drive partitions (the partition data plus the partition formatting). I had True Image create a single backup file containing all the partitions on the old hard drive to make restoring to the blank drive easier.

Once the backup of the original hard drive was created, I flipped my laptop over and opened the small door over the hard drive. To remove the hard drive, I had to lift one end slightly and gently rock that end of the drive while pulling away from the connector, in order to disengage the drive from the laptop connector. The old drive was mounted in a metal carrier, which had to be removed and installed on the new hybrid drive. The procedure was reversed to install the new drive. The only tool needed was a small Phillips screwdriver.

Booting from the True Image 2014 CD, I restored the full disk image I had made from the original drive to the new drive. True Image proportionally increased the sizes of most of the partitions in my image file, so that all the new hard drive's space was allocated among them. I then used another Acronis program, Disk Director 12, to resize some of the partitions to suit my needs.

Before I'd removed the old hard drive, I'd started the laptop repeatedly to measure the boot time. I repeated this with the new hybrid drive, and found that the boot time went from around 90 seconds to around 35 seconds.

LH531 Restoring Image to New Drive
The new hybrid drive has much more space and seems to provide a big speed improvement. Only one question remains - should this hybrid drive be defragmented? In a magnetic hard drive, the normal file write and erase operations result over time in files that are not stored in contiguous tracks on the disk, but have portions spread over many parts of the disk (the file is fragmented). In a spinning platter drive, this increases the time required to read the file (the read head must move more and often wait for the data to rotate under the head), so the drive should be defragmented periodically for optimum

performance. The same fragmentation occurs in an SSD, but since the read speed is the same for every memory location, the access time is not increased, making defragmentation unnecessary. In fact, an SSD drive should never be defragmented, as this reduces the drive's lifetime unnecessarily (each SSD location supports a fixed number of writes). I'll need to consult with Seagate and Toshiba to determine if SSHDs should be defragmented.

Edge – Microsoft's New Web Browser

By Sandy Berger, COMPU-Kiss www.compukiss.com sandy (at) compukiss.com

Yes, Microsoft has finally replaced their old bloated Internet Explorer web browser. The new browser which comes with Windows 10, is called "Edge". This is aptly named because it is much sharper than Internet Explorer. As a matter of fact, it is better in almost every way.

Edge is more secure, faster, and has new rendering engine. One of the best things about Edge is that it's newly designed interface is easy-to-use. Similar to the current Chrome browser, Edge has a cleaner look that makes it easier to use. The Edge address bar is front and center under a "Where to Next?" label. Although this is a bit simplistic, it works.

The Edge has a New Tab page that is quite customizable. It also has a well-designed reading mode that strips away all of the extraneous ads and navigation creating an easy-to-read version of an article. You can also easily save an article for reading in the future.

A Hub icon on the upper toolbar gives you easy access to your favorites, a reading list, your browsing history, and your current downloads. This download area is especially useful making it easier for the average user to find them.

And WOW, you can even write on the screen of a web page to add your own comments. Draw or type on any web page using a mouse or drawing with your finger on a touch-screen .You can draw in several different colors with three different sized pens. You can also highlight in several colors and add a text note. You can even draw a square on the screen to highlight and copy part of the web page. Once you have marked up the web page you can save it and/or share it with friends.

When using Edge you can also use Cortana, Microsoft's voice assistant to issue voice commands. Cortana will answer or will find the correct folder or program for you. It is extremely useful. You can even ask Cortana for more information on any text that you highlight.

In the future, Edge will support browser extensions from Chrome and Firefox and it will keep getting better and better. It is available at no additional cost along with Windows 10.

Interesting Internet Finds – May and June 2015

Compiled by Steve Costello, President / Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL
May 2015 issue, Boca Bits www.brcs.org / http://ctublog.sefcug.com/ editor (at) brcs.org

In the course of going through the more than 300 RSS feeds, I often run across things that I think might be of interest to other user group members.

The following are some items I found interesting during the month of April 2015.

VPNs the next big browser feature?
http://www.ghacks.net/2015/03/30/vpns-the-next-big-browser-feature/

This ghacks post explores the idea of VPNs being included as a browser feature. Opera acquired VPN provider SurfEasy, and the TOR browser is already based on Firefox, so this is something that just might come to pass.

Get Your Free eBooks Here
http://askbobrankin.com/get_your_free_ebooks_here.html

Bob Rankin lists some places to get free ebooks. I am always being asked where I get my free ebooks, so this should be of interest to anyone who read ebooks.

6 Amazon Prime Benefits You Might Be Ignoring Right Now
http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/6-amazon-prime-benefits-might-ignoring-right-now/

I am an Amazon Prime member, and there were a couple of things I didn't even know about. If you are an Amazon Prime member too, or thinking about becoming one, you should check out this MakeUseOf post to get the most out of your membership.

Force Close A Chrome Tab When It Becomes Unresponsive
http://www.addictivetips.com/web/force-close-a-chrome-tab-when-it-becomes-unresponsive/

It doesn't happen often, but sometimes I have a Google Chrome tab that becomes unresponsive. Until I ran across this post at addictivetips I had to close down the browser completely, now I can use this tip and continue what I am doing.

How to Share a Wired Ethernet Internet Connection With All Your Devices
http://www.howtogeek.com/213638/how-to-share-a-wired-ethernet-internet-connection-with-all-your-devices/

There may be times you can connect via Ethernet, but there is no wi-fi or cell service available. If you follow the instructions in this HowToGeek post you will be able to work with all your devices.

Why I'm (slowly) Switching to OneDrive
https://askleo.com/why-im-slowly-switching-to-onedrive/

Leo Notenboom explains some differences between Google Docs and Microsoft Office Online, as well as backup handling in OneDrive and Google Drive. Check it out, maybe it can help you decide what works best for you.

****

The following are some items I found interesting during the month of May 2015.
June 2015 issue, Boca Bits

How to Fix a Kindle eBook That's Not Downloading
http://blog.the-ebook-reader.com/2015/05/25/how-to-fix-a-kindle-ebook-thats-not-downloading/

It doesn't happen often, but it has happened to me before. Read this post and bookmark it for later, so that you won't have to work through trial and error like I did. One of the methods suggested should work.

How to Remove Ask Toolbar and Ask.com Search From Your Browser
http://www.maketecheasier.com/remove-ask-toolbar-and-search/

I don't know why, but this question has come up pretty often lately. MakeTechEasier shows how to remove them from your browser, as well as suggestions to prevent getting them in your browser.

The Best Hidden Features of VLC
http://lifehacker.com/the-best-hidden-features-of-vlc-1654434241

If you use VLC, my default media viewer, you might not be taking advantage of a lot it can do. Check out this Lifehacker post to learn about hidden features.

How to use Google Maps offline mode on iOS, Android
http://www.cnet.com/how-to/how-to-use-google-maps-offline-on-ios-android/

cnet explains how to set up Google Maps to use offline. This comes in handy if you end up with no service for some reasons, but won't do you any good if you don't set it up before you go. Check it out and use this way to still be able to find where you need to go.

Really, a $9 Computer?
http://askbobrankin.com/really_a_9_computer.html

Bob tells about an actually soon to be available cheap computer. This might not appeal to all, but I thought it was interesting enough to place here.

How To Tell When You Last Booted Your System [Windows]
http://www.addictivetips.com/windows-tips/how-to-tell-when-you-last-booted-your-system/

Addictivetips gives you two methods for telling when your Windows system was last booted.

****

Most Fridays, more interesting finds will be posted on the Computers, Technology, and User Groups Blog:

http://ctublog.sefcug.com/tag/interesting-internet-finds/

The posts are under Creative Commons licensing.

_____

I Have a Website—Now What?
Review of the April Monterey Bay UG –PC Meeting
By Joe Asling, President, MBUG-PC
May 2015 issue, mbug-pc newsletter   www.mbug.org   mbug-pc (at) mbug.org

On April 8, Emmanuel Rico Horca, adjunct professor at CSUMB School of Business and Small Business Development Center consultant, came to MBUG to discuss improving your business's visibility online. Rico had five tips to tune up and improve your website's effectiveness.

1. Get Visible
Website optimization is the process of designing your website to show up high in search engines; if possible, you want to be on the first page of search results. Be specific rather than using generalities. Instead of "Betty's Yummy Bakery" use "Vegan Cupcake Company." Search engine bots look for keywords, so be on target with your keywords and include as many as you can, particularly on your website's first page.

2. Get Your Website Listed

You can submit your website on **DMOZ** to have it listed on **Google**. **DMOZ.org** is a free open directory of website listings. You get listed according to the keywords on your website. "Have your copy say the keywords for you."

3. Get Found

If you have a location-based service, make sure it shows up in local searches and **Google Maps**. You can claim an address in Google Maps (just Google how to do it). Post multiple images of your business, both exterior and interior, so people driving by will recognize your location, and make sure that your phone number and hours of business and a link to your web address are visible. These should also be on the front page of your website so people will see them. Your website needs to be intuitive, and your primary tabs need to match your business (e.g., menus for a restaurant). You need "about us" and "feedback" icons where they are easily seen. Consider carefully what your defined service area is; for example, "Greater Monterey Bay Area" will get you more hits than "Del Rey Canyon."

4. Get Reviewed

Ask your satisfied customers to review your business online. **Yelp** and **Angie's List** are websites devoted to evaluating businesses. There are websites dedicated to reviewing everything from beer to mountain bikes. Check **ConsumerReview.com** and **ePinions.com.** You can include a link to a review website on your webpage to make it easy for readers to find your evaluations or compose their evaluations of your product.

5. Get Seen

It's easy to create and upload **YouTube** videos. There's a YouTube video demonstrating how to do just about anything! Your YouTube video can be used to inform, instruct, and influence and to help people make a decision about a purchase. The more people who watch your YouTube videos, the higher your visibility is. **Bacon Bytes** is a game-oriented blog; kids do YouTube walkthroughs of video games for us old folks to follow.

Advanced Topics

Another thing your website needs is analytics. "In the business world, if it's not being measured, it doesn't exist." **SEO** (*www.analyticsseo.com*) and **Web Analytics** (*www.openwebanalytics.com*) will help you record number of hits and how visitors explore your webpage.

YP.com (Internet Yellow Pages) has business listing and review services. Small Business Development Centers, run by **SBA** (*www.SBA.gov*), provide a variety of free consulting and training services.

Websites are accessed by devices ranging from desktop computers to portables to tablets to mobile cellphones. Your pages need multiple formats to make them look right on a variety of devices. **Mobify** (*www.Mobify. com*) can help you format your website for several types of mobile devices (iPhone, Android, Blackberry, etc.). Your website detects the accessing device and feeds it a correctly formatted webpage.

Hosting

Free vs. paid: "You get what you pay for." You want a Content Management System—this allows the webmaster to design and manage a site. Your host should also provide templates, design help, service, security, and analytics. **WordPress** (MBUG's host) is a good, reliable system. **Intuit** has inexpensive quality hosting also.

Membership Websites

Invite the membership to participate and notify them of updates to the website.
To find out who is visiting your website, you can give visitors free content, which you make contingent on their signing in.

Think of it as "Push and Pull"; push content to users and/or pull users in.
Send invitations with the Friend Finder tool.
Add a Members App for those with smartphones.
Blogs and forums invite visitors to share their experiences.
Go viral with social networking. Your organization can have a **Facebook** page and a
Twitter account.

Everything you've ever wanted to know about eBay

Book Review: *My eBay for Seniors*
By Chris Johnson, Editor & Designer, Golden Gate Computer Society, CA
April 2015 issue, GGCS newsletter   www.ggcs.org   editor (at) ggcs.org

My eBay for Seniors
By Michael Miller, Que, 2014
Education, $24.99

★ ★ ★ ★

The large sans serif type and its references to grandkids makes *My eBay for Seniors* a book geared to older folks in the publisher's eye. Everything else about the book—its information and colorful artwork—is for the beginner or average user—of any age. But I did like that I didn't have to whip out my glasses to read it.

Some of the instruction lists run into the high 20s for number of steps, but visually the book makes it seem easy with lots of clear artwork of what you'll see on the screen each step of the way. It shows you how to buy and sell and relist items...and what happens when you make a sale.

If you want to use eBay from your smartphone or tablet, the book even has a chapter dedicated to buy and sell that way too.

Bidding for items on eBay can be exciting like in a real auction—and, except for the cost of the item (and shipping charges if additional), you pay no money to eBay to shop or buy.

When you bid on an item and a box appears on the screen to tell you that you are outbid that means that someone put in a maximum bid that they are willing to pay that is higher than the amount you just entered.

You can do the same after you are the highest bidder. The book explains how to easily set up that maximum bid up so you don't have to hover around your computer, even on the day the item's auction will end. Though eBay doesn't like bid retractions, you do have that ability under many conditions if you made a mistake.

To win an auction for an item takes a strategy. The book's 10 tips for better bidding include the recommendation to bid in odd numbers, such as $10.03 instead of $10.

The book also recommends waiting till the last 10 seconds to ever bid on anything (also called sniping) and gives a list of automated sniping services that will do it for you if you can't be up at midnight when an auction ends. One of the services listed is even free: Gixen (www.gixen.com)!

eBay also lets you keep a watch list to track items you are interested in but haven't bid on yet. The watch list is only one of many lists eBay lets you keep in your account, which is called the dashboard in "My eBay." Others include items you've bought or sold in the past, and more.

You can pay for items in whatever way the seller lets you pay. Oftentimes people accept credit cards, but you can almost always pay with PayPal (using your credit card or other means), which makes it even safer for you. The book even details how to set up a PayPal account and how to link it to eBay.

You can most often shop safely on eBay, but occasionally people can run across deadbeat sellers...folks who take your money and don't ship. Two chapters talks about the risks on eBay and how to minimize them.

Various colored stars for each seller is a feedback system that rates the sellers so you can know if they've long been trusted on eBay. Most good sellers also offer a money-back guarantee, but you'll likely have to pay for the returning shipping costs.

Maybe you want to sell an item on eBay. The seller pays fees to eBay, not buyers. The fees depend on what the item is and how you want to sell it. The first 50 items you list each month (that's a lot!) are free to list, but you do pay a fee if it sells.

That final value fee is 10% of the total selling price (item price plus shipping/handling charges). If you are listing items in eBay Motors or Real Estate categories, the fee pricing differs.

eBay has many optional fees, such as having a boldface title, a subtitle, or a reserve price. Having a reserve price (that only you and eBay knows) lets you list an item at a low starting bid, but it won't sell unless the bidding reaches the reserve price you set in advance (you don't pay the fee, though, if the bidding doesn't reach the reserve price).

You can see the various fees at pages.ebay.com/ help/sell/fees.html. The book outlines how to use eBay's Fee Calculator too.

Another source of fees comes from PayPal, which most sellers use to receive payments for their items. Granted, eBay owns PayPal, but the fees are separate. The PayPal fee is $0.30 per transaction plus 2.9% of the amount paid to you by the buyer.

The book walks you through the process of setting up a buyer's account and the more detailed seller's account. You'll likely want to have a PayPal account too, which is easy to link to eBay. Again, the book details how to do it.

Beyond using the website, you'd need to prepare an item for sale and then ship it when it sells. The book details everything from finding items to sell to picking categories to sell it in to writing effective titles and descriptions and photographing and packing the item.

It even provides tables of grading systems for level of quality, a list of services to refer to, and the common abbreviations used, such as MIB for Mint in Box.

The book also lists what you cannot sell on eBay, such as ivory, lock-picking devices, tobacco, and used underwear...but people *do* sell them all on eBay (with cleverly couched wording in the descriptions). eBay does have an Everything Else > Adults Only category that a lot of people don't know about, but no nudity or sexually explicit content is allowed in the listing.

Although you may not copy someone else's picture for your eBay listing, you can use eBay's stock photos for certain items, such as books, CDs, and electronic products.

The book recommends that you shoot and edit your photos with 1600 pixels on the longest side (500 pixels minimum on the longest side) for the best possible display. You can post up to 12 photos for free.
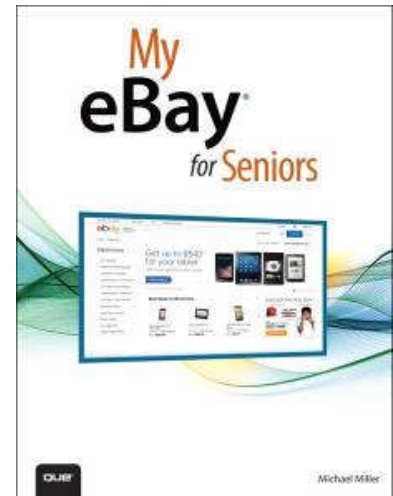
The book also describes how to determine the way to sell your items: Individually or in lots? List items yourself or use a service? Sell by auction or fixed price (or both with the Buy It Now feature that lets buyers bypass the auction)?

The book really is inclusive of everything you'd want to do on eBay, from canceling an auction to blocking an unwanted buyer to packing an item for shipping. The red boxes labeled "It's not all good" gives a heads up about pitfalls to avoid each step of the way. I'm a regular eBay buyer and seller and I learned some tricks too!

AARP has teamed up with Que Publishing to help those 50+ learn how to use technology, including smartphones, tablets, computers, and social media. Que and AARP are developing new products within Que's popular "My for Seniors" book series.

The AARP community may purchase a Que book, eBook, or video today and save 40% off the list price. Use discount code AARP in the "Enter a New Discount Code" box during checkout.

If your group belongs to Que's UG program, you receive a 30% discount.

The Tip Corner – May 2015
By Bill Sheff, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, Pennsylvania
May 2015 issue, The LVCG Journal   www.lvcg.org   nsheff (at) aol.com

Scams and Viruses
Last month I inadvertently typed in the wrong password for my AOL account, and could not get in. You would think I would go to "Keyword Password Reset", but for some reason I googled aol help. A site that appeared to be AOL connected me to a tech with an Indian dialect. Although I explained that all I wanted to do was reset my password, he told me that I had a problem and wanted permission to take over my computer to "clean it up". Brrr! That was close. It seems that more and more hackers are finding ways to get our information. So beware. I then did go to Password Reset and was back in in a matter of minutes.

If you ever discover that your C: drive appears blank and all your icons are missing, don't despair. Even though your antivirus program has cleaned a virus from your computer, it appears some viruses can leave behind some unwanted results. One such virus is the Windows 7 Recovery virus, which will hide your files in an attempt to make you pay to remove the virus. Try this tip which seems to work.

Click the Start button in the lower left corner of your task bar. Type cmd in the search box at the bottom of the menu and press Enter. If you're using Windows XP, click Run and type cmd into the Run box.

Then type attrib -s -h -r c:/*. * /s /d and press Enter to execute the command. After a few minutes it will finish executing the program. You can then close the command prompt window and check your desktop. The hidden files have been restored. By changing the c: drive to the name of a flash or other drive the tip should work.

Print part of an email or other text?
At a recent meeting the question came up. "How can I print a portion of an email?" Here are a couple of ways of achieving this.

One way is to highlight the section of the email you'd like to print. Select copy and paste to a word document. This method is good if you want to do some editing of the text.

Another method is to highlight what you want, right click, select PRINT. When the print dialog box comes up, in the "Print Range" box, place a check mark in the box that says "SELECTION".

Finally, highlight what you want, right click and select PRINT PREVIEW. Select the "As laid out" option click the drop-down button, and click 'As selected on screen' and you will see only the selected portion of text, ready to print. That will print out just what was highlighted.

Use Google Now for Quick Calculations
Need to calculate a tip. On your Android phone tap the Google Now Widget and tap the microphone or say Okay Google. You can then ask Google to calculate by asking, "What is 18 percent of forty two dollars?" Google now will then calculate your tip. You can also ask it many other questions such as what is the circumference of the earth?

Removing Duplicate Files
If you are like me, if something interests you, you copy and save it to your computer. Or you work on a project and have a bunch of duplicate files. There are many duplicate file programs available. There are some specifically made for music files, other for pictures and the old standby text files.

If you have some time and want to clean up some bloat down load Duplicate Cleaner. There are two versions a free and a commercial free. Try the free version before you decide to buy. You might find the free version is more than adequate.

Microsoft Update
In 2014 Microsoft issues an update for Windows Vista, 7, 8 and 8. 1, and then issued a warning for Windows users to uninstall them. The updates with the problems are KB2982791, KB2970228, KB2975719 and KB2975331.

To see if you have them on your computer go to Programs and Features and choose View installed updates and search for the above numbers by typing them in the search box one at a time. If you find one choose Uninstall. After you have checked for all the above and uninstalled any that you have found restart your computer.

Some users have reported problems restarting or even seeing the BSOD (Blue Screen of Death). The link has been removed and a fix is probably out now.

Windows Recovery
Fortunately, when Windows 10 comes out (which is free to all Win7 and above operating systems) they will be installing a refresh and rest function which will do away with updates and also the need for recovery images. Not needing the recovery points could save between 4 and 12 Gbs of space. Another nice perk is that you will not have to reinstall updates if you do have to recover your system for some reason.

Batch Renaming of Files
For years I used to use Batch renaming when I downloaded my pictures from my camera. But I haven't used it for quite a while until last week when I was reviewing my picture folder and realized I had to get rid of the cryptic file names the camera uses to something a human can understand. It is really very simple. Just highlight all the files, Right click choose Rename. You can name it anything and the batch file will number the files for you. Before you start put the cursor on the first file in the list. This also works with folders.