PC Post

30 YEARS OF USER HELPING USER
May 2012, Vol ume 30.5

Inside this Issue

The group meets at 6:30 p.m. at Denny's Restaurant, 1525 McHenry Ave., for its Random Access Special Interest Group featuring questions and problems members are facing. At 7:30, following dinner, the presentation will start.

BOD Meeting - June 6, 7pm at Ridgeway's
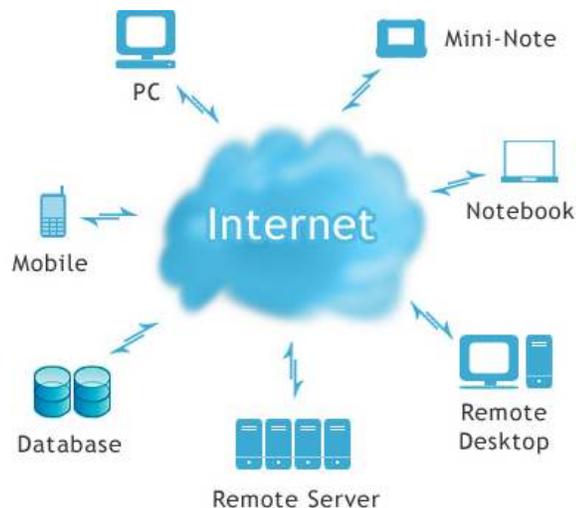
What is Cloud Storage and why do we need it?

Everyone is talking about Clouds, but they don't mean the fluffy white variety you find in the sky. Cloud storage is the future of online backup and file storage. It is without question the easiest and safest way to protect your files against, disaster, loss or theft.

In order to help you understand cloud computing, below we have broken down cloud storage into various categories. Our aim is to show you just how easily cloud storage can be implemented into various areas of your life and what benefits cloud computing can grant you.

Cloud for Business, Consumers, Home, Managers, Personal Use, Schools & Colleges, Students, Travelers, Music, Photos and Backup.

Next Issue to Offer Group Magazine Subscriptions

Over the last few years we have watched while the move to digital has caused a complete transformation of the music and camera industries. Companies like Kodak who couldn't adapt lost their lead in their industries. Others struggled to adjust making major changes to their businesses models to accommodate the new digital world.

The shift to digital has also greatly impacted the book, newspaper and magazine industries. As a magazine lover, I have watched the magazine industry with great interest. While the cover prices of magazines have remained stable, subscription prices have plummeted. Magazines like Allure and Better Homes and Gardens which sell for $3.99 an issue on the newsstand can be had for a yearly subscription (12 issues) of $10. Similar prices can be found for many other of today's popular magazines.

Right now, some of these magazines also offer digital magazines to their print subscribers at no extra charge. For instance Real Simple and Allure offer a digital edition for the iPad that comes with your subscription. These versions display the entire magazine including the full page colorful design, and all articles and ads.

And now there is a new effort to move the magazine industry to the digital world in an enticing way. Five large magazine publishers Condé Nast, Hearst, Meredith, News Corporation and Time, Inc. have joined forces to create an App called Next Issue that lets you read an unlimited number of their magazines in a digital format on a tablet. They have also enhanced these digital editions, with special videos, bonus photography and some interactive features. The App is currently available for Android tablets running Android 3.0 or higher. The magazines are optimized for both 7" and 10" tablets. Currently a few of the magazines are only available for one of those two size tablets, but eventually they will all be available for both sized tablets. There is also an iPad app in the works.

For $10 a month, you can read the latest issues of 27 monthly magazines, which include All You, Allure, Better Homes and Gardens (10" only), Car and Driver (10" only), Coastal Living, Conde Nast Traveler, Cooking Light, ELLE (10" only), Esquire, Essence, Fitness, Fortune, Glamour, Golf Magazine, Health, InStyle, Money, Parents, People Style Watch, Popular Mechanics, Real Simple, Southern Living, , Sports Illustrated Kids, Sunset, This Old House,

and Vanity Fair. You can also read back issues to the beginning of 2012. For an extra $5 a month, you can add several weekly magazines including Entertainment Weekly, People, Sports Illustrated, The New Yorker (7" only), and TIME. More titles are promised to be added in the next few months.

The pricing seems enticing at first. You are certainly getting a lot of titles for your money. At current magazine.com prices, I could subscribe to the print editions of Better Homes and Gardens, Car and Driver, Elle, Fortune, Popular Mechanics, and Real Simple for about $91 a year and many of these have free digital editions that come along with the print subscription. Using the Next Issue service I would get all of those plus many more for $120.

However, there are many nagging questions. For instance: How many magazines can a person read? Is reading a magazine on a tablet really as comfortable and satisfying as leafing through those glossy pages with your fingers? And what are the drawbacks to reading magazines on a tablet? I decided to find out. Next Issue has a 30-day free trial. I have a 10" Android tablet. So I just signed up with Next Issue. For the next few weeks I'll be turning the pages of more than 30 magazines with my finger. Then I'll be back to let you know if I think this dramatically different digital subscription model is a winner or a flash in the pan.

And, the Oscar Goes To….Making a Good Movie
By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA
April 2012 issue, Drive Light
www.uchug.org / president (at) uchug.org

I've discovered it is a lot harder to make a good video than it is to take a good photograph. It is definitely a lot more work.

For the most part, the majority of the effort involved in taking a good photograph occurs before the picture is taken. While some augmentation and enhancement can occur after the exposure, through the marvels of digital photo editing, much of the merit of a photo comes from basics like subject, composition, focus and lighting. While photo editing software can enhance a photo, perhaps making a good picture great, it can only go so far in fixing a poor photograph.

In making a great video, once you have captured the action, your work typically has only begun. In spite of all the star-centric hoopla surrounding the Academy Awards, have you ever noticed that the majority of the awards don't go to performers, but to creators.

There are only a few categories of awards given to actors and actresses. The majority go to writers, directors, film editors, cinematographers and designers of sound, sets, costumes and effects. In a lot of movies made today, most of the work is done after the filming is over. The difference between raw footage and polished final product is much greater for video than for still photography,

indicative of the amount of post processing work usually required. As with photography, however, it is still hard to turn poor exposures into a good final product.

I got my first still camera in 3rd grade, taking black and white film photos. In the 40-something years since, I learned to take decent photos (at least by my standards) using mostly slide film, where there was no chance for corrections after the exposure. I've had a digital camera for eleven years, but still don't typically edit or enhance my pictures after taking them. I've spent more time making digital corrections on the slides I have digitized, to fix the effects of film aging and imperfections, than on any of my recent digital photos.

Growing up, my family never had a movie camera. A neighbor friend my age got access to their family's old 8 mm movie camera, and he and I made a two-reel epic titled "The History of Aviation". Through careful planning and filming, we came up with a pretty impressive movie for a couple of grade school kids, though we probably destroyed most of our collections of model airplanes in the process (in addition to scorching the underside of his family's metal patio cover during our "reenactment" of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima). I'd love to see that film again, if it still exists.

When my wife and I had kids of our own, my in-laws gave us one of the early shoulder-mounted video cameras (it was so big and heavy, you had to rest it on your shoulder), which recorded directly on VHS tape cartridges.

It recorded some of the early moments in our children's lives, but being analog tape, the results were of mixed quality and could not be edited. We still have some of those 20-year-old tapes around (we should digitize them), but unfortunately I think a few were taped over at some time in the past. Later, we bought a smaller handheld camcorder, which used the smaller VHS-C tapes and was more convenient to take on family outings. These too would not be editable unless digitized.

My very first digital camera had a primitive video capture capability of 320 x 240 with no audio, which was about half the 704 x 480 equivalent resolution of the camcorder NTSC video, but was much more convenient to carry. It still resulted in only video snippets of our lives being captured. Even after graduating in 2007 to a new digital camera with 640 x 480 video and sound, I only shot occasional video clips, and never tried to find a way to edit and combine them into a coherent video feature.

For my birthday late last year, my wife surprised me with a Panasonic SD40 HD video camcorder. It records HD video (1920 x 1080) in the AVCHD (Advanced Video Coding High Definition) file format. Depending on the card size, it can store hours of video on an internal SDHC memory card.

One of the first things I learned about shooting HD video with this camcorder is that I'm going to need more hard drives. I think I shoot a lot of digital photos, sometimes hundreds per month. Using my 12 Megapixel camera, this averages 5 MB per photo,
I'm generating around 0.5 GB of new photos per month (assuming 100 photos), or 6 GB per year. I first used my new camcorder in earnest during family festivities on Christmas Day, and managed to fill up the 8 GB SD card that came with the camcorder that day.

If I hold my filming down to 16 GB of video per month, that means I'll generate nearly 200 GB of video data every year. How am I going to store it all?

The second thing I learned about shooting HD video is that not every computer can easily play it. I normally use my XP laptop PC to copy my still photos from memory cards to hard drive and to view them, so I plugged in the SDHC card from the camcorder. Unfortunately, I could not view the .MTS AVCHD video files with any
program on that computer. When I put the SD card in my wife's new Windows 7 laptop, I was able to play the files with Media Player. Score another one for Windows 7.

To make the 45 minute video on computer upgrading that was shown at our meeting last month, I started by shooting 51 video segments, totaling 5.7 GB. These included the introductions and descriptions I gave, the scenes of dis-assembly and modification of the computer, and the screen shots of the computer showing the results. A tripod proved essential in filming the scenes where I was talking, as I had to work with a film crew of only one (me). The camcorder's display can be flipped around to allow the subject of the video to see how they look onscreen. The tripod was also used in most of the shots where I was working on the computer, since it usually took two hands to do the work. I would set up the tripod and camcorder to give a good view of the hardware, and then start filming. I was not watching what was being filmed, but just made sure my activities stayed within what I understood was the field of view.

One of the filming mistakes I made was in sometimes not allowing enough "lead in" and "lead out" time at the beginning and end of the scenes. Excess footage can be trimmed, but you can't easily make more footage after filming is done.

I started shooting scenes before determining what program I would be using to edit the video, so I was not sure what editing capabilities I could count on. I was not sure the program I would use could add titles, so I printed titles on paper and held them up in front of the camcorder. I later found titles could be added using software, but not with the flexibility of my paper signs.

Although I had a couple of commercial video editing software packages available to install, I decided to initially try the editing software that came with the camcorder, Panasonic's HD Writer LE 1.0. I installed it on my wife's laptop to make sure I'd have enough horsepower to do the video editing quickly.

I found the software would not recognize the raw video files I had copied from the SD memory card to the computer's hard drive. To use the captured video with this program, I had to connect the camcorder to the PC with the provided USB adapter cable and download the files from the camcorder through the program. The program had all the basic features I

had seen in other video editing software. It allowed clips to be combined on a timeline, with a number of choices for transitions between scenes. Scenes could be edited for length, and basic titles could be added.

I chose the least flashy transitions and put the video segments together one by one. Because of the brief lead-ins I had shot, I could not add much in the way of additional titles, but fortunately the signs I had filmed worked well. I was concerned that 45 minutes might be too long without a break, so I split the video into two 22 minute segments, allowing an intermission in between.

The program could convert the finished video to several different resolutions on DVD or Blu-Ray discs for playing on home players or computers.

'll try using one of my fancier video editing programs with this camcorder one day, but I found the Panasonic-provided software could turn out a good video.

Since making a coherent video out of the filmed segments I made was not too difficult, I'll probably try to make similar edited videos for all the events I film.

Parted Magic
By Dick Maybach
April 2012 issue, BUG Bytes, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ
www.bcug.com / n2nd (at) 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 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 below shows the latter in operation.
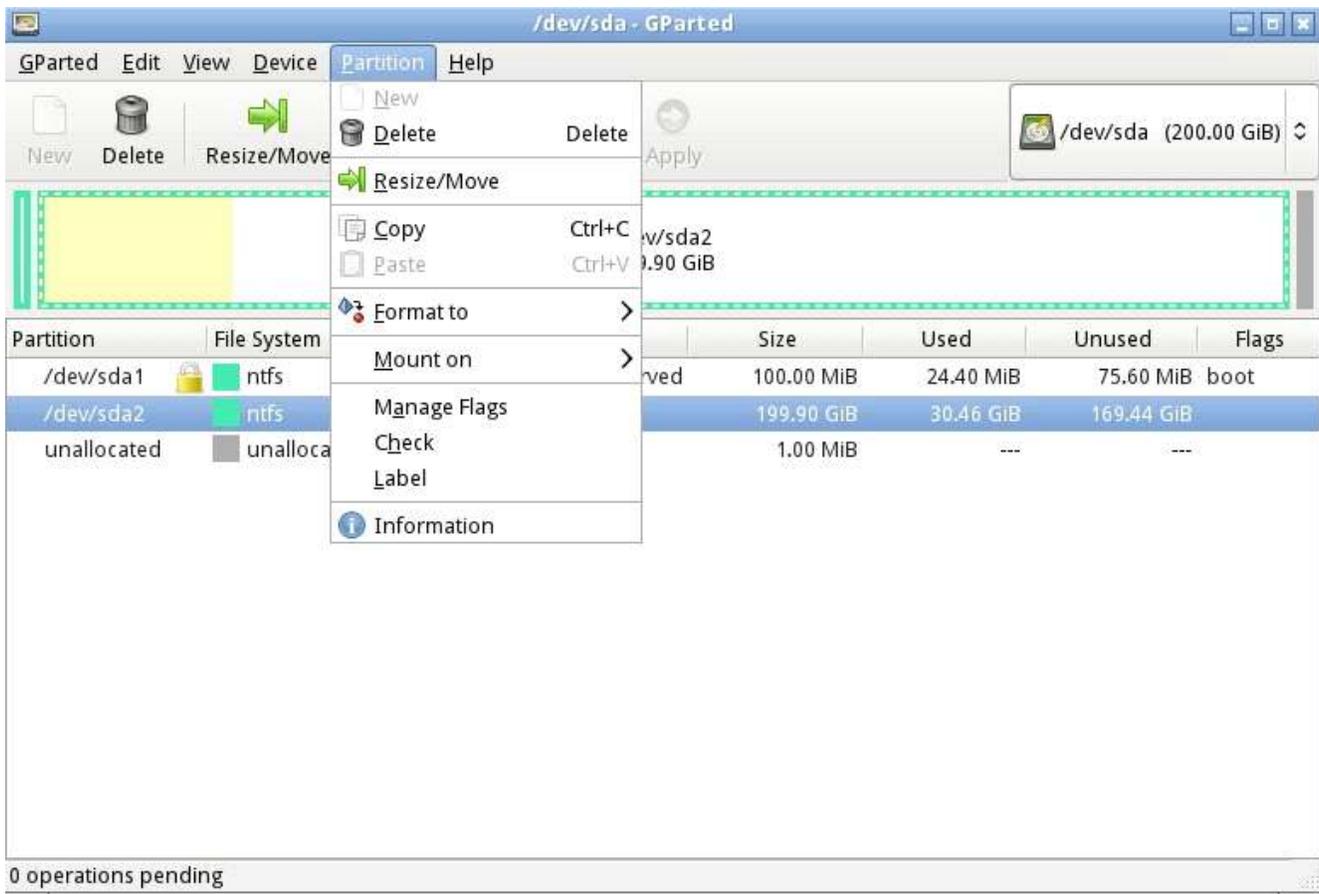
Here we've selected an NTFS partition, which (among other things) we could resize. GParted can operate on Microsoft, Apple, and Linux partitions. Other partition tools allow you to create a file containing an image of an entire partition or to clone a disk, copy everything on a disk to different one (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).
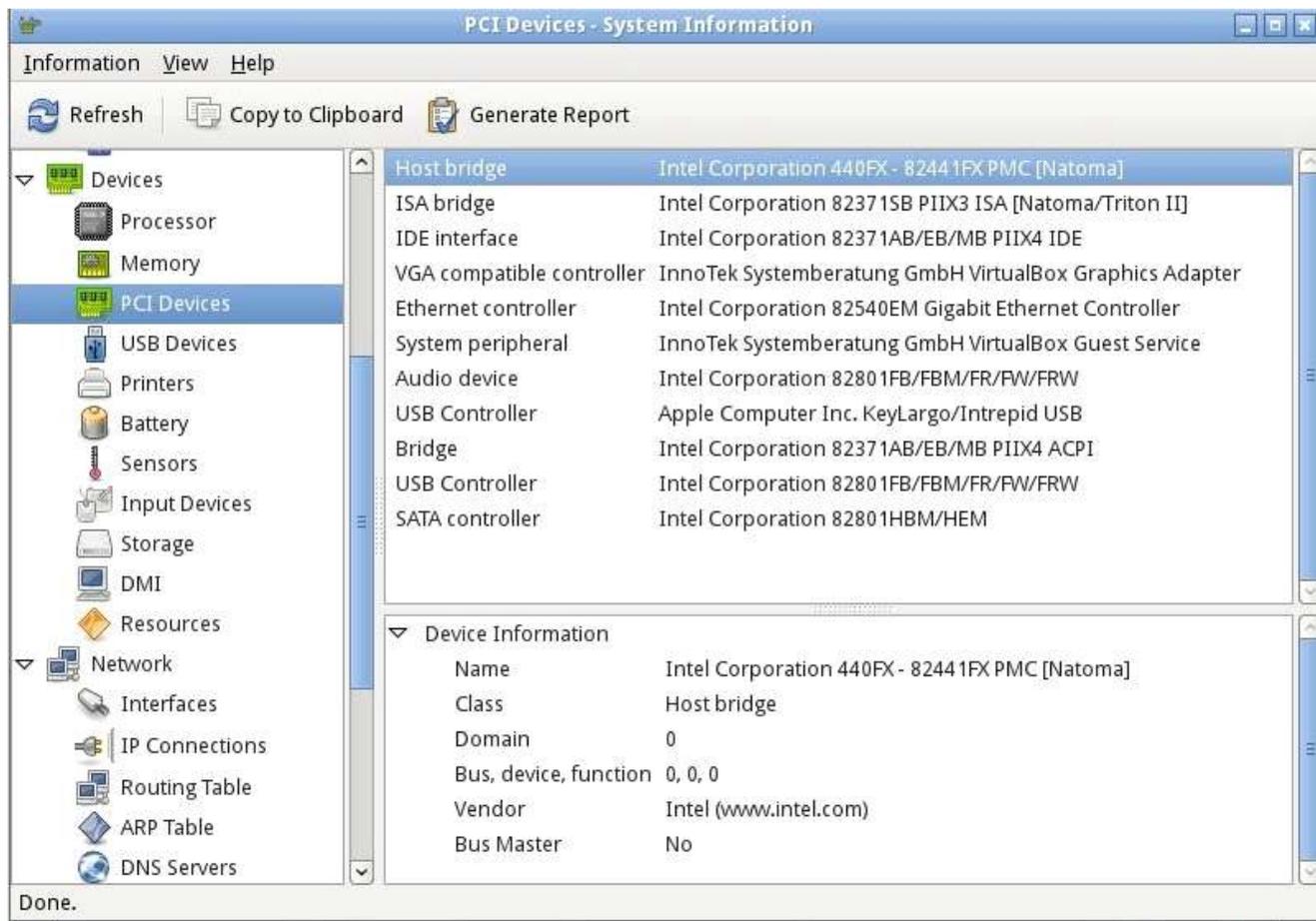
I recently gave my 10- and 11-year-old grandchildren netbooks. The computers came with Windows 7 installed, but I wanted to install Linux, because there are many educational programs for it and because it's much more resistant to malware. (My 9 year-old grandson, at the advice of one of his friends, 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 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.

Microsoft's Free Fix it Center Fixes Many Windows Problems

By Ira Wilsker, Member, Golden Triangle PC Club, TX; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio Show Host, Mondays, 6-7pm CT, KLVI.com
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WEBSITES:
http://support.microsoft.com/fixit/
http://fixitcenter.support.microsoft.com/Portal
http://fixitcenter.support.microsoft.com/Portal/Features

Some time ago, I wrote about an early beta (pre-release) version of Microsoft's free Mr. Fixit utility. With the early beta test now closed, I am happy to report that Mr. Fixit is alive and well, and offering many times more free fixes than it did when I first reviewed it. Mr. Fixit is now the character or avatar for the Microsoft Fix it Center, which offers automated fixes for Microsoft products online, typically by downloading and installing a specific problem centered client to the PC.

According to Microsoft," Fix it Center finds and fixes many common PC and device problems automatically. It also helps prevent new problems by proactively checking for known issues and installing updates. Fix it Center helps to consolidate the many steps of diagnosing and repairing a problem into an automated tool that does the work for you."

Mr. Fixit and the Fix it Center, available online at support.microsoft.com/fixit, has an interesting motto that simply describes its functions that can repair many common Windows

problems; Easy, Relevant, and Be In Control. In terms of being easy, Microsoft say " Microsoft Fix it Center makes getting support easier than ever, with tools that help solve the issues you have now and prevent new ones." Mr. Fixit is easy to install and run, fully automated, and provides some degree of preventive care. In terms of being relevant," Microsoft Fix it Center personalizes solutions for your device, showing you only what pertains to your hardware and software." The phrase "Be in Control" is appropriate because Mr. Fixit provides the user with a simple method to stay in control of the maintenance of the computer by allowing the user to customize settings (choose the level of automation), manage multiple devices, and enable simple record keeping of all updates and repairs made on each device.

The online component of the Fix it Center (support.microsoft.com/fixit) allows the user to

optionally select a problem area labeled "1 Select a problem area (optional)" displaying a group of eight large icons labeled Top Solutions, Windows, Internet Explorer, Windows Media Player, Entertainment (Xbox 360 type icon, covers the Xbox, Zune, and Windows Phone), Office (Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Outlook, Info path, Live Meeting, and project), and Other (SharePoint, Exchange, SQL Server, Streets and Trips, and several other Microsoft products). Clicking on one of the eight icons opens a context sensitive window "2 - What are you trying to do?" In this window is listed many of the common problems faced by windows users; clicking on one of the items open a second selection window on its right, offering a more detailed list of issues or devices that are relevant to the original selection. Below that pair of windows are several possible fixes, listed as "3 View or run solutions for (your chosen problem)". In that window is a selection of "Run Now" buttons, each linked to a context sensitive solution. Clicking on the appropriate Run Now button executes a file that contains the likely fixes for the selected problem, repairs any damaged, missing or corrupted files and registry entries, displays results and possible additional fixes, and then quietly exits.

Since I have been having periodic issues with the Windows Media Player on this Windows 7-64 computer, I tried the Fix it Center fix for Media Player problems. It downloaded a small client (339k), loaded a "Troubleshooter," explained what it would try to do and the steps that it will take in order to rectify the problem, and gave me the option of allowing it to identify and repair the problems automatically (recommended), or allow me to choose the fixes. I chose the recommended option, and the troubleshooter ran, detecting the problems. After the first attempt to repair my Media Player, I was given the choice to reset my Media Player and libraries, or do nothing; I chose to reset it. In my particular case, the Fix it Center was able to successfully reset my Windows media player and its scripting activities, but was unable to repair the Media Player Library. I was then asked to load the problem program, Windows Media Player, and asked if Mr. Fixit had successfully resolved my problem; it did not, but offered some additional possible solutions.

One of the most common irritants faced by many PC users is that their computer is running sluggishly, and appears to be much slower than when new. While there are many possible reasons for this degraded performance, the Fix it Center offers some possible automated fixes for this dilemma. From the Fix it Center main webpage (support.microsoft.com/fixit), click on the Windows button, and then in window #2, select "Fix performance, errors, or crashes". In the right window, select "Slow performance, startup, shut down, or memory". In window #3, select the Run Now button adjacent to, " Fix Windows system performance problems on slow Windows computers; Automatically troubleshoot and repair Windows performance problems. Improve, optimize and speed up Windows computers and make slow running PCs faster." That will initiate the downloading of another small 339k client that offers performance improvement diagnostics and solutions. Accept the license terms, and the performance "Fix it" client utility will be installed. Either allow it to detect and fix problems automatically (recommended by default), or let it detect performance problems and then you can select from a menu of possible fixes. On my desktop computer the only performance issue that it detected, which I chose to intentionally not repair, was that I had several programs loaded at boot.

There are hundreds, if not thousands of possible Windows fixes freely available from the Fix it Center, and it has become my first choice when looking for a fix for Windows problems. The Fix it Center detects the operating system on the computer (Windows 7, Vista, or XP), and displays appropriate fixes explicitly for that operating system and whatever Microsoft product is connected or installed on that computer.

Whenever a PC user encounters what may be a Microsoft related problem, the Fix it Center would be an appropriate first choice to check for a possible solution. The Fix it Center utilities may not just identify the problem (as well as other related problems unknown to the user), but may possibly fix the problems as well.

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Coffee Shop Computer Etiquette
By Mark Tiongco
www.geeks.com

This Tech Tip is a list of experiences that I have found to be a hindrance but can otherwise be remedied for all you mobile tech commuters. Have you ever found yourself trying to get work done at a Starbucks/Panera Bread (or name your favorite go-to spot) but can't because some inconsiderate customer is making it difficult/impossible to get work done? Let's dive right in to what this article is all about, coffee shop etiquette!

This Tech Tip will help outline a general etiquette list so mobile tech commuters can share a common courtesy in this world filled with laptops, e-book readers and coffee shops!

1.) Keep a power strip handy
Leave a power strip in the car or backpack as a contingency plan in case you walk into a coffee shop and see one power outlet with both plugs occupied. Offer to plug your power strip in; usually everyone is okay with it as many times there are 3-4 laptop users nearby who would like to charge their rigs. If you want to go compact, you can also find a 2-3 plug power strip and just keep it in your backpack/notebook bag/man-purse.

2.) Offer your power outlet to someone who needs it
And the majority of us hardly ever allow our notebooks/tablets to completely discharge, never mind that virtually all notebooks built today average at least 3-4 hours of battery life. (plenty of time to get important work done!) The interesting thing is that computer makers have listened to repeated consumer demand of more battery life (many average 7-10 hrs run time) but unfortunately this still happens. So if you find yourself fully charged and not planning on camping out, offer it to that fellow laptop user who might be running on battery fumes.

3.) Offer part of your medium (or large) table to someone else
Yes I know this is America and it's all about space but if you were the unlucky soul to walk into a completely full coffee house, wouldn't you feel good knowing someone is willing to share his/her table? We gotta help each other out!

4.) Invest in a notebook cooler or lapdesk
If you arrive at a busy coffee shop and find the only option is a love seat or couch, you'll feel better knowing you won't burn your naughty bits and thus protect future generations.

5.) Understand Your Notebook's Power Capabilities and Settings
Assuming the coffee shop you walk into is full of selfish and unforgiving souls (yes, I have encountered them myself!), knowing your notebook's power capabilities enables you to adapt accordingly to still get work done.. For example, I know my notebook has an approximate battery life of 5 hours but when I have had to work on battery mode due to lack of available

outlets, I instinctively know to dim the LCD screen and throttle down the CPU to extend battery life since I know sometimes I might be there for at least 5 hours.

6.) Pick up a tablet PC

If you find that your purposes for lugging around a traditional-sized notebook are for leisurely email checking, casual web browsing and music, a tablet PC might be appropriate for you. With the explosion of tablets such as the Samsung Galaxy Tab, Motorola Xoom and even the super-duper popular Apple iPad, these slim devices can do many simple everyday computing tasks but can fit in a carrying sleeve or small messenger bag. In addition to the weight reduction, a tablet PC's perks include not requiring you to wait during start up (instant on OS!), not having to find a table and pull out/lug around a power adapter, and can last virtually the entire day on a single charge. However as a disclaimer, I am not suggesting you ditch your notebook computer in favor of a tablet PC but simply that they complement each other depending on the task that needs to be done.

7.) Don't be a Squatter!

I'm sure everyone has been hearing about Starbucks' recent issues with Squatters; these are Starbucks customers who buy a cup of coffee and then occupy a table/power outlet with their laptop and basically camp out for countless hours. While I do agree this is technically legal since SBUX offers free Wi-Fi for customers, they have the right to limit use such as covering up power outlets and eventually offer your seat to other paying customers. Out of courtesy and basic respect to your fellow commuters, you should budget your time, get your work done, and then relinquish your seat for the person who needs a table to get work done (just as you probably did before him/her). However, if you insist on camping out for the entire day at Starbucks, the least you can do is buy more than a cup of coffee every 2-3 hours as a sign of good faith that you're not a moocher!

Book Review - Focus on Lighting Photos
By Rosemary Lloyd, President, Big Bear Computer Club, CA
May 2012 issue, Bearly Bytes
www.bigbearcc.org / rosemary (at) sugarloafpc.com
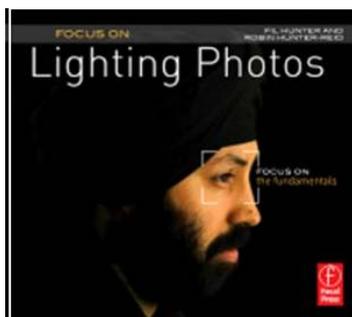
Excellent photographs gain much of their impact from the way the subject is lit. Focus on Lighting Photos is a unique how-to book that includes many pictures and diagrams. It demonstrate how light can be used to create the mood that the photographer wants to project. This is the latest of six books in 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.

The target audience is hobbyists. Fil and Robin emphasize that you do not need to spend a lot 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%
.

Computer Humor

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PC Post

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