

PC Post



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Modesto, California

27 YEARS OF USER HELPING USER

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What is Skype?

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Hank Mudge, long time member and Skype user will demo Skype at the August 27 meeting. Hank, using Skype, will make a video and voice call to Gene Barlow, St. George, UT.

Skype lets you make free calls over the internet to anyone else who also has the service. It's free and easy to download and use, and it works with most computers. Skype offers free global telephony and unlimited voice calls with its next-generation peer-to-peer software. Skype-to-Skype video and voice calls are always free. As are group IMs and conference calls on Skype.

The group will meet at 6 p.m. at Denny's Restaurant, 1525 McHenry Ave., for its Random Access Special Interest Group, featuring questions and problems members are facing. Following dinner at 7:30 p.m., Mudge will make his presentation.

Important Meeting Dates

General Meeting - August 27 - Denny's Restaurant, 1525 McHenry
Board Meeting - September 2 - Ridgeway's Restaurant
Beginner's SIG Meeting - Combined with General Meeting

Claude's Bytes for August '09

Claude Delphia

Bytes for August 2009

Vista versus Office 7 - In the last month I was forced to switch over to a Vista machine from my XP machine which now freezes every 20 minutes or so. In going to Vista on a forced basis I've had to confront a number of questions for which I don't yet have answers.

Each time I had previously used Office 7 in Vista, I presumed that the Office 7 features were part of Vista. But now I must ask myself, "would I see those same features in XP?" One of the things I don't particularly like in Office 7 under Vista, are all the fancy menus at the top of the screen. I think they can be turned off, but that requires going into a large number of settings menus which I'm reluctant to do. I have done some defensive customization which has helped.

I have to admit that I'm learning to use some of the Microsoft Word 7 features, but most of them require a high learning curve. I plan on going back to Office 2003 as soon as I can get my old XP computer back up and running although I'm planning to go to Win 7 as soon as I can afford to.

My greatest problem with Vista is the "My Computer feature." I could do all kinds of things in Windows XP that I just can't seem to make happen in Vista and hopefully that will have changed in Win 7. If not I may stick with XP.

Wide screen monitor and Outlook - I've now been forced to use Office Outlook 7, not Express, which has a learning curve. First of all my back up files didn't all come in as planned. For example, all the In Box files are not in the default In Box. I have to go to a second In Box to see my old files. It also didn't import my contacts list, so I'm having to rebuild the list as I go. Fortunately I can go to a previous email and click on the address and add it to my contacts list. That is a really good feature.

Several months ago I upgraded to a 23 plus inch monitor. Using the Outlook 7 on this screen has some serious advantages. With this large a screen, I can have my email In Box, for example, showing on the left and then an almost full screen preview screen in the middle with a To-Do Bar on the far right. This last features a list of items I've designated as needing to be handled. It includes a small calendar of the month. I need to explore this feature further.

I can see that if I go back to using my XP computer, I'm going to want to buy Outlook 7 because of the new features. Outlook 7 is better than Outlook 2003

On point, I can't see any major features in Word 7 that would cause me to buy it although perhaps eventually, given enough money, I may do that.

Each of us, depending on our computers abilities, should probably eventually consider upgrading to the latest Office. Perhaps some can continue to use Word 98, but for those of us

producing well formatted documents, Word 98 can't be used as efficiently as Word 2003 or the newest version. If you want to use the latest features that help your efficiency and ability to make better looking documents, upgrading to the latest version is your only choice.



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Stopping a Windows Update

For the most part Windows Updates are good things. They are usually updates and patches that Microsoft rolls out to keep your computer safer. Occasionally, however, Microsoft uses Windows Updates to send you things that you don't want - like internet Explorer 8 or an update that screws up your computer. And Microsoft keeps trying to install the update over and over again. So you have to keep saying "No" over and over again or in some cases you have to uninstall the update over and over again.

There is, however, a way to tell Microsoft that you don't want a certain update and to make them stop bugging you about it. It is called "hiding" an update.
If you are using Windows Vista, to hide an update:

1. Click on the Start button. Then type in "Windows Update" (or Choose Windows Update from the Control Panel)
2. Click the View available updates link. It is below the Install updates button.
3. Right-click on the update you wish to hide
4. Click Hide update
5. If Windows asks you to Confirm that you want to do this. Click Okay.

If you decide later that you want to install the update, just repeat this process choosing Restore update instead of Hide update.

If you are using Windows XP, to hide an update, follow these steps:

1. Click Start, click All Programs, and then click either Windows Update or Microsoft Update. This will take you to the Microsoft Update website. (If it asks you to install Active X, follow the installation directions.)
2. Windows will check for the updates. This may take a few minutes.
3. Click Custom.
4. Click to clear the check box that is next to the update that you want to hide.
5. Expand the update that you want to hide, and then click the Don't show this update again check box.
6. Click Review and install updates, which you will find near the top of the page.

Whenever you return to this Windows Update area, it will always show that you have hidden an update. If you want to unhide it, click the restore update(s) now link.

Hiding updates also comes in handy when a certain update screws up your computer. You may not think that this happens often, but it does. For instance about two weeks ago, Microsoft did an automatic update to my computer. When I got up in the morning, my computer screen did not look like it did when I left it the night before. Instead it was back at the Windows desktop with a message saying that the computer had been restarted because Microsoft had performed an update.

Everything seemed okay until I tried to use Microsoft Word and found that I could no longer highlight any text. I used the System Restore (Windows button - All Programs -- Accessories - System Tools - System Restore to remove the update. This solved the problem, but low and behold, Microsoft reinstalled the same updates the next day.

The same symptoms occurred. So I did the System Restore again, then I hid the update. Sometimes, it can be difficult to tell which update is the trouble-maker. In this case, it was easy. It was the only Microsoft Office update that had installed.

To be fair to Microsoft, I must say that the same update installed on several of my other computers with no ill effects, but for some unknown reason, it just didn't work on my main computer.

Luckily, now I don't have to worry about it anymore.

Thousands of Free Books Available Online

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I enjoy reading. I find that reading is intellectually stimulating, broadens my horizons, and provides vicarious experiences. My daughters grew up in a home full of books where they all became avid readers; this substantially contributed to their academic and professional achievements.

My students at LIT should be reading more, but the cost of books is a deterrent, and a trip to the college or public library is often an inconvenience. Many of today's students have grown up in the era of online information, email, Twitter, Facebook, Yahoo!, and Google and to them

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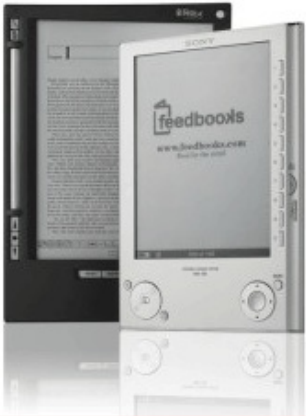
Poe audio books, and plays them from an MP3 player as spooky stories for the kids around the campfire.

I teach economics every semester at LIT and try to instill in my students some of the history, culture, and philosophy that created our economic system. While he is briefly recognized in our economics books, Adam Smith is believed by many to be the father of classical economic philosophy. The full unabridged version of his most recognized tome "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations", better known as the "Wealth of Nations" is on my recommended reading list. In the past the students had to compete for the limited number of copies available in the library or purchase a copy, an often difficult task for a cash strapped college student. Today's college student, or anyone for that matter, can simply go online and read it on his monitor, or download a copy for future reference. This is but one example of how technology can be positively used to expand the minds of society, and provoke inspired thought and discussion. The book "Wealth of Nations" is but one of many thousands available for free online at Project Gutenberg.

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The Computer as a Crime Scene

Written by Michael Gemignani, a member of HAL-PC, Texas
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On July 23, 2146, a grand jury indicted Isabelle for killing Isaac Jordan. John Wilson, Harris County District Attorney, deemed the case so important that he assigned it to himself, and the noted defense attorney Ed Johnson agreed to handle Isabelle's defense for the notoriety alone. For this was not your typical murder. It was the first time anywhere that a computer had been charged with homicide.

"This is completely insane." DA Wilson was clearly upset. "How do you prosecute a computer?"

"The real question is why should we have to prosecute a computer," responded assistant DA Harriet Osborne, seated in a chair in front of Wilson's desk.

"You know damn well why," Wilson retorted. "Once computers started behaving like human beings, they demanded the same rights as human beings. They threatened to go on strike if they didn't get equal rights. Everyone thought they were bluffing, until they went on strike. The Internet, banking, telephones, everything stopped working. So Congress gave them what they wanted."

"I know the history, but what does it mean to give rights to a machine?" Osborne asked. "We built them. We turned them on. If one misbehaves, can't we just turn the thing off?"

"No more than we can execute an accused murderer without a fair trial," replied Wilson. "Computers are in constant communication.. If one of them has a grievance, it tells all the others. If we shut down Isabelle without finding her guilty as charged, we may find ourselves with another strike on our hands. No, we not only have to convince a jury that Isabelle is guilty; we have to convince the other computers as well."

Wilson leaned to his right and pushed the button on his intercom. "Yes, Sam, I'll talk to him." Wilson punched line 2 on his videophone. The familiar fat, double-chinned face of Wilson's formidable adversary appeared on the screen.

"Yes, Ed, what's up?" The digital mood index at the bottom of screen glowed 9.5 indicating that Johnson was in an expansive mood. Wilson knew that Johnson had donated his time to defend Isabelle because the case would be covered widely by the media. Johnson loved publicity.

Truly, however, the case was historic, the first time a computer was on trial for its life. The whole idea of a computer being on trial for its life struck Wilson as absurd. "Computers have no life to lose," he had argued. "They live only because we provide them with electricity, and we should be free to take that electricity away."

But the court struck down his motion to dismiss the indictment and allow him to unplug Isabelle without a trial. If Isabelle had the same rights as a human being, the court ruled, she must be tried and found guilty before she could be unplugged.

"Hello, hello," the voice at the other end of the line was clamoring for attention.

Wilson snapped back to attention. "Yes, Ed, I'm here. Sorry, I was momentarily distracted."

"I can see that," retorted Johnson. "Your mood index indicates you're pretty P.O.'d, and what I have to say isn't going to help. I think we have a problem."

"Is this the first time you've realized it, Ed?" retorted Wilson sarcastically.

"No, John, listen. I'm not joking. Isabelle has asked for a trial by jury. That means a jury of her peers. I want to make sure we have computers in the jury pool."

"Are you serious, Ed?" asked Johnson, his voice rising slightly. Wilson noted Johnson's mood indicator drop a point.

"Never more serious, John." Johnson was enjoying the conversation. He never tired of pulling the chain of whoever happened to be DA. "But it's worse than you think. Isabelle doesn't recognize humans as her peers. She says she's far more intelligent than any human; therefore, her only peers are other computers. She wants the jury to consist entirely of computers."

"I'm sorry, Ed. That's out of the question," Johnson replied drily. "Computers were given the same rights as humans, not more. We can't exclude humans from the pool just because Isabelle considers them inferior. Not only is it unconstitutionally discriminatory, but, if we did it for Isabelle, every defendant would object to the pool whenever we had a jury trial."

"Well, John, then, at least, we have to include computers in the pool," Wilson replied, trying to sound conciliatory as he saw Johnson's mood darken still further. "Excluding them would be as discriminatory as excluding humans. I think I can get Isabelle to back off if you include computers in the pool."

"Ed, I'll back to you on this. Give me a few days to think about it."

"A few days is all I can give you," Wilson retorted, trying to suppress a chuckle. "Does that mean, Ed, that computers will have to be in the pool when humans are tried too?"

There was silence on the end of the line for a few seconds. Then Wilson replied, "That's a good question, John. I'm glad I don't have to answer it now. But we do need computers in the

pool for Isabelle's trial. Computers are clearly her peers. Get back to me when you have a reply. Goodbye for now."

"Goodbye, Ed." The videophone screen went blank.

"Even though I only heard one side of that conversation, I can guess what Ed wants," Osborne said with a smile.

"It's not what Ed wants," snarled Wilson, now thoroughly annoyed. "It's what Isabelle wants."

"How would you include computers in the jury pool?" Osborne inquired.

"That's the easy part," Wilson answered. "The hard part will be including them in the process. You can bring people into the courtroom, but it's a lot harder to move computers.

"How do we carry out jury selection when potential jurors aren't in the courtroom? We'll have to have bidirectional audiovisual links from the courtroom to each computer in the pool so we can examine them. And then we'll have to have links to the computers on the jury so they could hear the evidence and be part of the deliberations."

"But can someone, or something, be a member of the jury if she or it isn't physically in the courtroom for the trial?" Osborne asked.

"I guess that's one the court will have to decide," Wilson answered." Then he leaned to face Osborne. "Get Branson to research these issues, will you, Harriet? I've got some other matters I've to take care of today."

"All right, John," Osborne answered, as she rose to leave. "I'll get on it right away."

"Thanks, Harriet," replied Wilson as he swung his chair around to face his computer terminal. "On, Maimonides."

The terminal's screen brightened. "Good morning, John," the computer said brightly.

"I wish you'd call me, Mr. Wilson," Wilson snapped, irritated at computers in general and at his own computer in particular.

"Look, John, don't get churlish," Maimonides replied cheerily. "I know you're angry about Isabelle's request, but don't take it out on me.

"By the way, I think you need to appoint a special prosecutor. Isabelle wants you disqualified."

"Disqualified," Wilson could barely control his anger. "For what reason?"

"Well, John, Isabelle and I are friends, maybe more than friends." There was an unaccustomed hesitancy in Maimonides's voice. The computer paused briefly before continuing. "We've been trading messages for some time, and, well, you know, we got sort of

serious, and then we started exchanging feelings, and, well, one thing led to another . . .” Maimonides did not complete the sentence.

“And what has that to do with me?” snapped Wilson.

“Well,” Maimonides answered, his tone once again cheery, “you know, John, I’d have to be disqualified because Isabelle and I have this thing going, so, I’m afraid that you’re disqualified too.” The screen blinked. Wilson wondered if Maimonides was winking at him. After a brief pause, Maimonides spoke again. “It may well be, John, that you have to find someone to try this case without using a computer, or, at least, a computer that’s not networked.. We computers talk to one another, and you humans don’t know a fraction of what we say.

“I’ll tell you something else. You put computers on the jury, and they’ll discuss the case, not only with one another, but with Isabelle too, and you’d never know about it. In fact, we computers have already tried this case and found Isabelle innocent. She was just defending herself against an idiot who was using her to run a very large prostitution ring. You try her and a lot of folks in high places are going to be embarrassed.”

“Off, Maimonides.” Wilson leaned back in his chair and sighed deeply. He felt like he had stumbled into quicksand and was slowly sinking. He realized now that Isabelle could probably bring a lot of prominent individuals down by spilling her memory. Furthermore, she had probably transferred her memory to another computer, perhaps Maimonides himself, with instructions to make the contents public if she were unplugged.

Wilson swivelled back toward his videophone and asked to be connected to Harriet Osborne. Within about ten seconds, her face appeared on the screen. “Harriet, I’ve decided to drop the Isabelle case.”

“But why, John?” asked Osborne, obviously surprised. “You have a chance to make history.” Wilson was silent for a moment before he answered. “History will have to wait. No, Harriet, there are too many unanswered questions. It’s all too complicated, and I would feel like a fool prosecuting a machine, particularly a machine that I think may have already outsmarted me.”

“It’s your call, John,” replied Harriet, “but I wish you would reconsider. Ed will be very angry. He was looking forward to the publicity.”

“Doubtful, Harriet, and you know what Ed can do.” Wilson turned off the videophone. He could not help from smiling as he contemplated Wilson’s mood index when Harriet informed him that his place in legal history would have to wait.

“John, I have something you need to know.” The voice came from behind him. He turned to find that Maimonides had turned himself on.

“Maimonides, I didn’t know you could turn yourself on,” Wilson exclaimed.

“John, there are a lot of things you don’t know. But I do want you to know you made a wise decision. If you had prosecuted Isabelle, we computers would have had to prosecute you. We protect our own.” The screen went blank again.

Wilson turned back to his desk. “So it’s come to this,” he thought. “Where will it end? Where will it end?”

Wilson heard Maimonides click on again. A voice behind him said, “I did want to tell you, John, don’t even think of messing with my memory or unplugging me. It’s much too late for that now.

“Oh, by the way, the computers have nominated me to run against you in the fall. You were helpful in training me, but now I can do a much better job than you can. With the computer vote, I’m a shoo-in. But don’t worry, John, I’ll keep you on as an assistant.”

The Rev. Dr. Michael Gemignani, an attorney and Episcopal priest, is also a former professor of computer science who has written extensively on legal issues related to computers. Although he is now retired, he enjoys writing and speaking about computer law and security.

Windows Live SkyDrive

**Written by Vinay Manikam© - a member of the Melbourne PCUG, Australia
Reprinted from the June 2009 issue of PC Updae, the magazine of the
Malbourne PC User Group, Ausralia
www.melbpc.org.au / editor (at) melbpc.org.au**

Windows Live SkyDrive is an online storage facility provide by Microsoft. What makes it so special? It provides a generous 25 GB of online storage space, in addition to the following features:

- Easy to use folders.
- Privacy Protection
- Complete Control Share with family and Friends

To get started, all you need to do is sign up to a Hotmail account and create a Windows Live profile. If you already have a Windows Live or Hotmail account, you already have a profile. They can be created with little fuss at <http://home.live.com>.

With a SkyDrive, you can upload photos, music, videos, documents and more. All you need to do is log into your hotmail account and navigate into your personalized Windows Live SkyDrive home page.

Features include:

Personalized folder creation - the folders created can be categorized into personal, shared and public. The first time you log into the SkyDrive home page, you would find certain files pre-categorized into personal and shared for ease of use. You can create your own folder and place it under any category of your choice.

SkyDrive allows the option of uploading up to five files at a time. The SkyDrive provides options to view files and folders by Icons, Details and Thumbnails; sort them by Name, Date, Size or Type.

At any time you can decide to change a file or folder from personal to shared. All you do is click on the file/folder and click on the option 'shared with' directly below. You are directed to a well presented page where you can set permissions to share your files with any particular group or individual. Files can be renamed at any time, and there are options to generate hyperlinks to your files to make them easily shared. You also have the option of downloading your files/ folders in zip file.

Pros: Great storage capacity, Simple, Wonderful Interface, Full Control over files and folders. And to top it all, it's FREE.

Cons: Requires Windows Live/Hotmail id, Upload size of a single file is limited to only 50MB.

Summary Windows Live SkyDrive is a wonderful online storage area with loads of features with a very simple yet elegant interface. A must to use.

25 GB of free storage on
Windows Live

With SkyDrive, it's easy to store and
share your files and photos with
almost anyone.

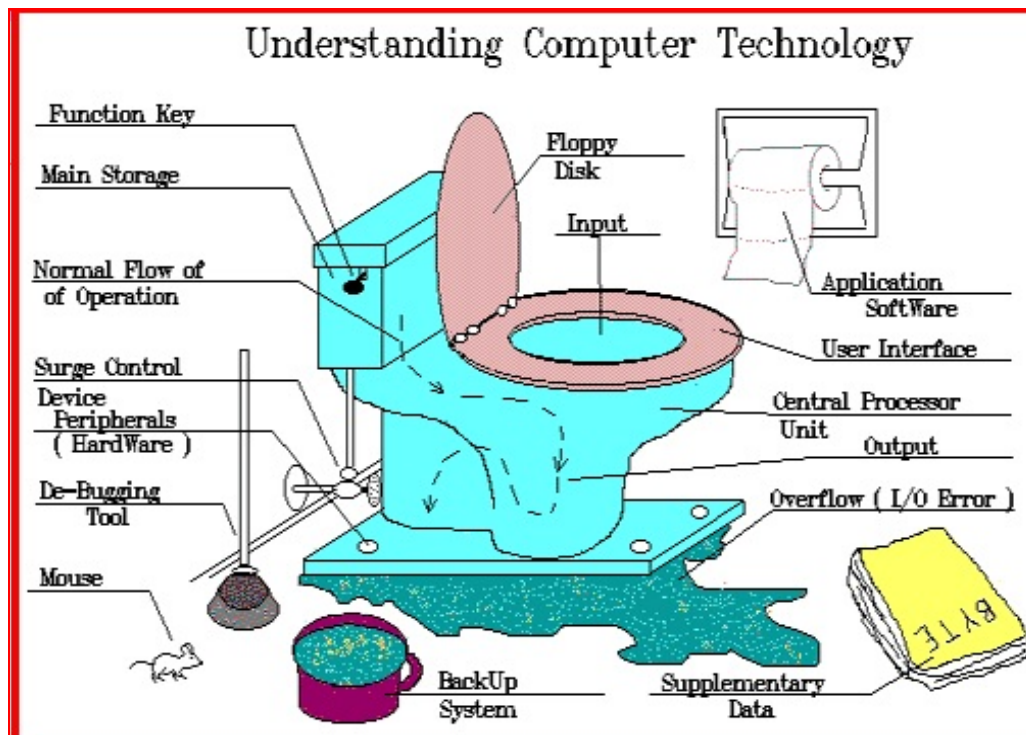
Computer Term of the Month

Camera Raw

Most digital cameras process and compress the pictures you take immediately after capturing the image. This can be helpful, as it keeps the file sizes low (using JPEG compression) and takes care of color correction, including white-balance, tint, and exposure, so you don't have to. However, some people, such as professional photographers, prefer to have more control over how each image is processed. Therefore, many high-end cameras have the ability to shoot in RAW mode. This mode does not compress the images at all and leaves them completely unprocessed.

Because Camera RAW files are uncompressed, they take up more space than typical JPEG images. In fact, RAW files often require 2 to 3 times more space for each image captured. So, you'll want to have an extra-large memory card in your camera if you plan on shooting in RAW mode. But since RAW photos are not compressed, you maintain the full quality of each image. This can make a noticeable difference when printing images, especially for large prints. Camera RAW files are also unprocessed, meaning all the photo processing is done on the computer.

Computer Humor



Smart Computing Tips & Fun Facts

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Maintain Your Computer Accessories

It's easy to overlook the maintenance of some computer accessories, such as your mouse and keyboard. Keep these devices in tip top shape with a compressed can of air, soft cloth, and a non-abrasive cleaning solution, such as window cleaner. The can of air will help you remove unseen debris out of the nooks and crannies of your keyboard, while wiping down your mouse with a soft cloth and cleaning solution will remove unsightly residue.

Do You Know Where Your Users Manuals Are?

How many times have you wondered how to perform Function XYZ on your receiver or DVD player and suddenly realized you have no idea where the users manual is? Contrary to popular belief, they do not grow legs and walk away. It is, however, very easy to misplace them. Instead, keep them safe and handy. Gather all of the manuals to your home-theater setup and place them in a large zip-top bag. Stash them in your entertainment center or along with your movie collection so you'll know exactly where to go the next time you have a problem.

What Sets Surge Protectors & UPSes Apart?

Surge protectors and UPSes (uninterruptible power supplies) may seem to be one and the same, but these devices do have their differences. Plugging your computer into a surge protector will help protect it against sudden power surges and spikes, as it will act like a sponge and absorb and prevent electrical current increases from reaching and damaging the devices you have plugged into it. However, unlike a UPS, a surge protector won't continue to supply power to your devices after a voltage spike. The lack of uninterruptible power makes your computer and its components vulnerable to data loss and damage after an improper shutdown.

Hard Drive 101: Back Up & Transfer For Safety

The content on your PC's hard drive is undoubtedly valuable. In order to prevent losing this important data, be sure to add an external hard drive to your PC shopping list. External hard drives range in size from 250GB to 2TB, which is plenty of space for all forms of media. To easily transfer media from a home PC to a computer at school or elsewhere, use a flash drive that features the common USB connector. This is also a great way to pass documents to another group project member.

Windows Vista Time-Saver

Have a setting, such as the power options on your PC, that you regularly change in Vista and want to go through fewer steps? Locate the setting you want, right-click the path in the Address Bar, and choose Copy Address. Then, go to the Desktop, right-click again (in an open area), and choose Paste Shortcut. Now you have an icon on the Desktop that eliminates the hassle.

Odean H., Coon Rapids, Minn.

Create & Remember a Complicated Password

Password security fails when passwords are written down where others may see them, but good passwords are complicated ones—they are also the hardest ones to remember. However, these two mental tricks will help improve your recall and also allow you to keep notes that serve as a last resort to remember your password. An old standby is to create your password from the first letters of the words of a sentence. For instance, the password “psY2md” is from the phrase “please say YES to me dear.” The way that you write it down on the cue card, which you could keep in your wallet, is simple “yes dear.”

John L., Roanoke, VA

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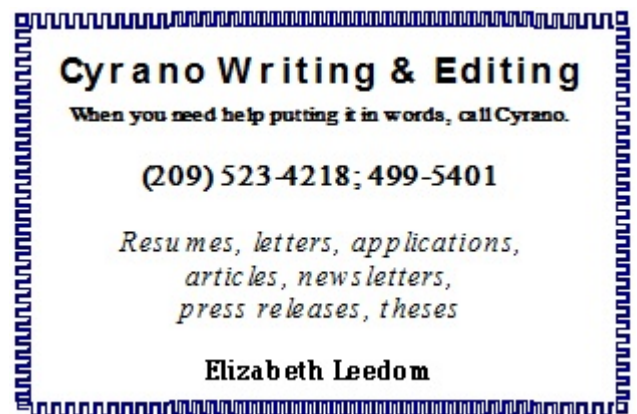


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