

PC Post



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March 24, 2011

Intel's Light Peak / Thunderbolt

Will it revolutionize connectivity in your home or workplace?
Is it faster than a speeding bullet!

The presentation by Terry Fix will cover Intel's development of Light Peak; how it will speed up your workflow, and how it will minimize the need for USB-2, USB-3, FireWire 400-800, eSATA data ports, and VGA, HDMI and display ports.

Will it be accepted by the other major electronic and tech companies in the industry?

Providing an industry standard, USB was originally released in 1995 at 12 Mbps. Today, USB 2 operates at 480 Mbps and tomorrow USB 3 will operate at 5 Gbps and will be available soon.

Intel's Light Peak/Thunderbolt at 10 Gbps is now available on the MacBook Pro. So the question is, will companies like Dell move to USB 3 and Thunderbolt?

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 - November 3, 7pm
Ridgeway's*





www.compukiss.com
sandy@compukiss.com

Service Packs Explained (and needed)

Although most of us still think of Windows 7 as a brand new operating system, it is, in fact, starting to show its age. Windows 7 made its debut on October 22, 2009. Is one and one-half really old? Well, in the computer world, it is not old, but it is certainly full-grown. One sign of this is that Microsoft has just released the first Service Pack for Windows 7.

A service pack is a collection of updates, bug fixes, and enhancements for a software program. As you know, their Windows operating weekly and they patch or, you so that they remain safe from improvements or system. At a certain point in updates, adds any other and issues this batch of important to note, that when service pack also makes sure enhancements work well together and offer good stability for the operating system.



Microsoft routinely offers updates for systems. These updates come out might say, repair the operating system hackers. They can also include enhancements to the operating time, Microsoft gathers all of those updates and enhancements they have updates as a service pack. It is also Microsoft issues a service pack, this that all of the updates and

The question that I am most often asked is this, "If I have installed every update that Microsoft has released, do I still need to install the service pack?" The answer is "yes." Often the service pack contains additional updates and/or enhancements that were not included in the weekly updates. Also, a service pack makes sure that all of the updates are put together properly to make your system run well.

In fact, Microsoft thinks that this is so important that they only support the operating system when it has the proper service packs installed. Each service pack should be installed when it is released. If, for some reason, they are installed all at the same time, each is installed sequentially.

So, for Windows XP you should have Service Pack 3 installed. Windows Vista should have Service Pack 2, and Windows 7 should have Service Pack 1. To learn what service pack you have installed, just click on the Start button, right-click on Computer or My Computer, and then click Properties. You will see the service pack listed under the Windows edition.

You can go to the Microsoft website and install a service pack from there, if you happen to be missing one. All service packs from Microsoft are free. If you are using Window 7, the new service pack will be offered to you through Microsoft's automatic update service. This Windows 7 service pack can take up to 30 minutes and will re-boot your computer. I have installed Window 7, Service Pack 1 on several computers without a problem, but you should be aware that installing a service pack is a big update. Microsoft recommends that you back

up your computer before installing a service pack. And to be honest, you should be backing up your computer anyway. So if you don't have a backup strategy in place, this is a good time to implement one.

The newest version of Internet Explorer - IE 9 was released March 14. This is by far, the best version of Internet Explorer that Microsoft has ever released. IE 9 won't run on Windows XP; it requires Windows Vista or Windows 7. Although Microsoft is not requiring Windows 7 Service Release 1 to install IE 9, it is advisable to install this Service Release before you install IE 9.

Service Packs are a fact of life for Windows users. Installing them may be a bit of a pain, but you really need them to make sure that your Windows system is secure and stable and that it performs well.

Cell Phone Lingo

By Wil Wakely, President, Seniors Computer Group, CA

March 2011 issue, Bits and Bytes

www.scgsd.org / [willw \(at\) adnc.com](mailto:willw@adnc.com)

When it's time to buy or upgrade to a new cell phone, are you as confused as I am with all the fancy terms and acronyms in the sales pitch? They make my head spin. Some of the terms you will encounter refer to the technology generation of the phone, as in G0 to G5. About every 10 years the next larger G (generation) number appears denoting a major improvement in cell phone technology. Each generation improves the speed, security, power usage, range and reliability of cell phones.

G0 refers to the original mobile telephone, a large unit stored in the car trunk with a hand-set between the driver and passenger seat. Remember those? Essentially it was a souped-up short-wave radio. These first made the scene via Motorola and Bell Telephone in the 50's.

Next came G1 using GMS tech (see below) which also was analog, first introduced in Japan in 1979 and later in the USA in 1983. In 1992, G2 was a major improvement using digital technology vs. analog that was used in G1. So what's the difference? Analog is a continuous smooth signal like whistling a tune. Digital rapidly samples the song and converts each small time segment into a series of ones and zeros, or digits. Through some clever complex calculations, these digits are converted back to the original sound tone and volume. The advantages of digital are that the data can be compressed and encoded for security and no information is lost as long as the 1/0 signal can be detected, even from a lot of accompanying noise.

In 2001, 3G was introduced using a new technology called CDMA (code division multiple access) developed by our local Qualcomm company. This is a very complex encoding that allows many more users on the same channel at the same time. G3 is probably the most common system in use today.

G4 arrived in 2006 and allows 1 Gbt/s (one gigabit per second) downloads from a fixed location or 100 mbt/s (megabits per second) from a moving vehicle. These high speeds allow streaming high-definition video (HD movies) on your cell phone. Also, connections to the Internet are faster and better. G5 is still in the lab and promises even more features, but may not arrive before 2020.

The cell phone field is rampant with 3, 4, and 5 letter acronyms. Here are a few that a salesman may try to impress you with:

- GMS (global mobile system): still widely used in older phones.
- TDMA (time domain multiple access): sharing the airwave in small time slots.
- FDMA (frequency domain multiple access): sharing the airwave in different frequencies.
- CDMA (see above).

An analogy to the problem of multiple access is a room (channel) in which people wish to talk to each other simultaneously. To avoid confusion, people could take turns speaking (time division), speak at different pitches (frequency division), or speak in different languages (code division). Other terms you may encounter are LTE (long term evolution), OTDMA (orthogonal TDMA) and WiMax (similar to WiFi). These are fancy names for some of the latest improvements in the field. So the best strategy for buying a new cell phone is to read the reviews and then find a salesman you can trust. Some of the above information may help you understand his pitch and also impress him with your knowledge.

Powermat

Reviewed by George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society, AZ
March 2011 issue, TCS eJournal

www.aztcs.org/ georgehardingsbd (at) earthlink.net



You probably carry at least one portable device, a mobile phone. To keep it charged, you need a charger for a home outlet or one for the car. When you travel, either locally or away from home, you must remember to carry one or both of these chargers. It's cumbersome, but that's the price of a mobile device.

Or maybe not! Powermat has a solution for any of your mobile devices, and it doesn't require a charging cord. How do they do this? You charge a Powermat unit, then carry it with you wherever you might be.

Just set your mobile device on one of the panels of the Powermat and your device is charged wirelessly by induction. What does that mean? You don't need to know. It just works.

I received a Powermat for evaluation. It is a small 3" X 3" tri-fold device. It unfolds into three connected panels, two of which are charging panels. The third section is the storage battery

that allows the device to be used wirelessly.

You first charge the Powermat with a wall outlet. Then fit your mobile phone or other device with a receiver tailored for your specific type of device. Then simply place the mobile device on the Powermat. You'll hear a beep to indicate that connection is made and that your mobile device is charging. Another beep sounds when your device is removed.

The tri-fold Powermat I received is one of several styles available. Some are smaller, some come with a Power Cube, a unit that connects to your mobile device and is what is placed on the Powermat.

I tried out my wife's Blackberry on the Powermat. The unit comes with a Power Cube which you connect to the Blackberry, then place it on the Powermat to charge. The Power Cube is about one and a half inches square and has a white, smooth surface.

One corner of it has a wire attached with a connector with adaptable heads for almost any receptacle available today.

The wire fits neatly into a groove around the edge of the Power Cube when not in use. I also received a receiver for my iPhone. A receiver is a shell into which the iPhone fits. It has a compatible plug in its base and a unit on its back similar in function to a Power in function to a Power Cube. Once the iPhone is in the receiver, you need only place it on the Powermat to charge it.

Powermat announced at CES an agreement that will provide wireless charging capabilities in airports, through the installation of Powermat units in terminal seating. Airports are difficult environments in which to obtain recharges. This solution will benefit the many travelers with mobile devices that need charging in an airport. In addition, Powermat will be working with GM to incorporate in their cars, starting with the Chevy Volt, a charging solution for most mobile devices, without the use of wires.

About: Powermat

Vendor: Powermat

www.powermat.com

Price: tri-fold \$130, receiver \$40

Smartphones (Part 2) Control and Interaction

By Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

March 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor

www.spcug.org / [president \(at\) spcug.org](mailto:president@spcug.org)

The smartphone doesn't have a mouse to let you push a pointer around the screen, so then, how do you control the interaction? The smartphone has a touch-sensitive screen which interprets movement of a finger (or fingers) on the screen. A whole new set of "gestures" or touch controls have been developed. Some of the new gestures are the "flick," and the

"pinch". The flick is done with one finger and its quick movement indicates the intended operation, like turning a page. A pinch is done with two fingers and is typically used to enlarge or shrink something on the screen. Mostly, you use your finger to point to things that you want done.



Another gesture or interaction is to "Select an Icon" for movement. To do this, you Touch and Hold the Icon. After holding it for a second or two, the App will be selected and you will receive feedback. On the Droid2, the feedback is called haptic feedback, which means you get a slight vibration on the



touch-sensitive screen. On the iPhone, the icons on the page begin to wiggle.

Applications or Apps are what you use to get things done. Some common and very useful Apps are Contacts, Calendar, Places, Maps, Mail (Yahoo or Google), Notes, Time & Date, and Browser. There are also Apps for YouTube, Skype and Kindle. The Kindle App turns your smartphone into a reader that has access to the Kindle (Amazon) library of books, many of which are free.

There seems to be an App for almost anything that you would like to do with your smartphone. (If you don't find an App for something you want to do with your phone, maybe you can invent one. There is always some software programmer willing to take on an interesting challenge.) In addition to Apps, there are a myriad of games available for the smartphone, many of which are free. For android devices, Apps and games are found at the Android Market. (iTunes is used by the iPhone.)

The Market is an App that comes with the phone. To get something from the Android Market, just touch the Market App Icon and you will immediately be at the front door of the Market. Here you can choose from Apps or Games or a selection that is presented on the opening screen. If you choose Apps, you can then choose to review all Apps or only the Free Apps. (The same is true for Games.) Once you find an App or game you are interested in you just touch it and if it is free, it will be downloaded to your smartphone. If there is a cost, you will



have to set up an account so that your credit card can be charged. Most of the Apps that are not free are under \$10.

All of the Apps on your smartphone are installed and available in an All Apps area, which slides out onto the current home screen. (Android devices have multiple homescreens.) On the Droid2 this area is accessed by pressing an Icon at the lower-center of the display screen.

So after you have decided how to use your home screens, you can put an App there by finding it in the All Apps area and then Touch and Hold the desired App icon. When the App is selected and ready to be placed, you will get feedback and the App will appear on the home screen that was below the All Apps area. Apps can be moved between home screens by Touch and Holding the App and waiting for the feedback, then moving the App in the direction of the home screen that will be the new home screen for the App. On Android phones, an App can be deleted from a home screen, but not from the All Apps area, by

Touch and Holding the Icon and then moving it to a red trash can that appears at the bottom center of the display.

When you want to use an App, you just touch it and it starts to perform. You will see the Icon spring into action, attempting to provide its functionality. Once started, other options may be available from a menu by touching the Menu button. (On the Droid2, the Menu is in the lower left, below the display screen). For example, if you touch a Contacts App, it will display your list of contacts. When you find the contact of interest, a touch will display all the information relating to that contact. Touching the Menu button gives you options to Delete or Edit the contact.

With all these Apps and a pretty small screen it would be nice to be able to organize your Apps; so, unlike most computers, the Droid2 has 7 home (display) screens, arranged horizontally. You expose another home screen by flicking your finger on the touch-sensitive home screen in the direction of the screen desired. For example if you are on home screen #4, the middle home screen, and you want to go to home screen #3, you would flick to the right. To go to home screen #5, you would flick to the left. Multiple home screens make it easy for you to organize your Apps. Apps that you think work together can be collected on a particular home screen. You could have a home screen for entertainment, one for work, one for family, another for sports. Any organization of Apps that makes sense to you would be appropriate.

This only scratches the surface of the features, interface techniques, and usefulness of a smartphone. Future articles will concentrate on some of the more interesting features, but I think you will now agree that:

Smartphone == PDA + (not so smart) phone.

Free Comic Books Online

By Ira Wilsker, Member, Golden Triangle PC Club, TX; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio Show Host, Mondays, 6-7pm CT, KLVI.com iwilsker (at) sbcglobal.com

<http://www.techsupportalert.com/free-books-comics>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cult/buffy/economics>

<http://borderwalker.com>

http://www.comicweb.com/goldenage_comics.htm

https://read.dccomics.com/comixology/#/free_comics

<http://digitalcomicmuseum.com>

When I was a kid growing up in the 50's, I enjoyed buying and reading comic books. While most of them were a dime, some were expensive at a quarter. My dad acquiesced and when I with him to the drug store to buy funny comic books that he approved, such as Little Lulu. My mom gave in if I wanted to buy any of the classic comic books, which were literature transformed into a comic book format. Some of my elementary school teachers decried comic

books as the ruin of my generation, and confiscated them in wholesale quantities from me and my classmates, probably to surreptitiously read in private and to trade with the other teachers for their stash of contraband. Today, with the internet, video games, and other forms of entertainment, contemporary comic books are not as popular or as widely available as in the past. For present and former comic book aficionados, there are now free online resources that allow some of us to relive our long lost juvenile days, and to also allow today's generations to experience the joys that I enjoyed decades ago.

One of the top free software information websites, Gizmo's Freeware (techsupportalert.com) recently published a directory and reviews of the top free online comic book repositories (techsupportalert.com/free-books-comics). Gizmo made it a point that the listed sites were not pirate websites displaying illicit copies of copyrighted content, but instead were totally legitimate websites with totally legal content.

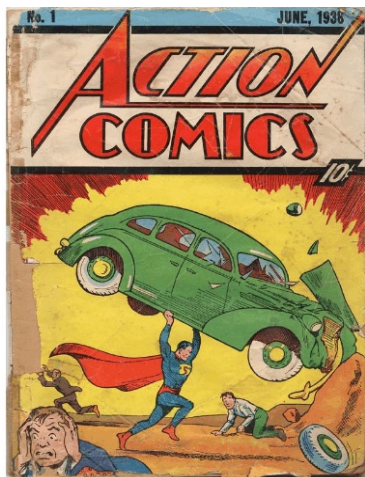
The first listed site that I visited displayed the first issue of Action Comics, dated June, 1938, which is the issue that introduced Superman to the world. According to Gizmo, a copy of this issue sold recently for \$1.5 million, but anyone can view it online for free.

One of my adult daughters is a fan of the TV version of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer", and would probably find the 11 "e-comics" posted online by the BBC most interesting (bbc.co.uk/cult/buffy/ecomics). BBC has also posted several of the "Dr. Who" comic series online at www.bbc.co.uk/doctorwho/s4/misc/fiction/writerscomics for those who like the popular TV show of the same name.

"The Comic Web" at www.comicweb.com/goldenage_comics.htm has over 30 full-length comics from 1936 to 1955 that can be viewed online for free, and downloaded as a PDF for only a dime. Captain Marvel #1 "Captain Marvel Battles the Vampire" from 1941 started a cult classic, and can be viewed online at www.comicweb.com/onlinecomics/captain_marvel_01_story.pdf. Other Comic Web holdings include a few of the World War II series of super hero comics "Fighting Yank" where the super hero, wearing a cloak and tri-corner hat reminiscent of 1776 takes on the axis powers. On the bottom of each "Fighting Yank" page is a patriotic statement of the day, encouraging the reader to buy war bonds or to contribute to the scrap drives to defeat the axis. Considering the date of publication and the then contemporary events in the news, it is obvious how the "Fighting Yank" would appeal to the children of the day. One of the oldest comics on the Comic Web page is "Detective Picture Stories #1 - Bogus Bills" from 1936. "GI Joe #10" from 1950, reflects some of the sentiments from early in the Korean War, where the U.S. soldiers have to deal with the likes of an attractive female reporter while dealing with a "Russky tank". While patriotism is a common theme of many comics of the period, what may be the epitome of a patriot super hero may be the 1941 rendition of "The Flag" who is the adopted son of a



crippled war hero, and has the speed of the wind, and the strength of a hundred men. In his red, white, and blue uniform he takes on the enemies of America. In Our Flag #3, The Flag removes a flag bearing the swastika from the dome of the capitol building, and defeats the enemy who has torn down the American flag from the Capitol building; in just 16 pages, The Flag saves the country. While not as dramatic, in the 1941 comic book "Stars and Stripes #4" another super hero, the Iron Skull, saves a convoy of ships from marauding U-Boats. While historically inaccurate, comics like these can be used to demonstrate some of the popular ideas and philosophies of the day, and show how those contemporary super heroes dealt with the pressing issues facing the country.



DC Comics, one of today's predominate comic book publishers, has been publishing comic books since 1934. In addition to producing print comic books, DC Comics has made available a large collection of free comics online at read.dccomics.com/comixology/#/free_comics. With new titles added frequently, DC Comics has an impressive collections of comic books available. In Superman Confidential #1 (January 2007), the secrets of Kryptonite are explained; for those who may be unaware of the Superman saga, Kryptonite is a strange mineral from the defunct planet Krypton, that has the unique power of sapping Superman's legendary strength, depriving him of his super powers. In a two-page teaser to encourage the reader to purchase the full comic, DC Comics online has "The Origin of Robin", the super hero that becomes the famous sidekick of Batman. Other

super hero comics included on the free DC Comics website, consisting of either teasers or full editions, are the likes of Justice League of America, Wonder Woman, and the Green Lantern.



One of the largest libraries of online comic books is the Digital Comic Museum (digitalcomicmuseum.com) which has over 6000 comic books available for free download (free registration required). On this website I found many of the comics that I enjoyed as a

child. The date ranges of the comics at the Digital Comic Museum are from 1902 to 1986. Some of the larger collections sorted by publisher on this site include Charlton Comics with 650 issues; American Comics group (493); Better/Nedor/Standard/Pines Publications (410); Comics House Publications (445); Dell Comics (517); Quality Comics (1243); and Fawcett Comics (1120 issues). Many old classics are available, including such oldies as The Katzenjammer Kids and Little Orphan Annie. There is even a comic book available that was published and distributed by the U.S. Government, "Burt the Turtle Says Duck and Cover"; we were provided a copy of this exact comic book in elementary school where it was mandatory that we read it in class, and then practiced our "Duck and Cover" drills that were supposed to protect us from a Soviet nuclear missile strike. The user should be aware that many of the comic books available for free download from this website are compressed with a variety of compression methods, so that a free universal decompression utility such as PeaZip (peazip.org), or 7-Zip (7-zip.org) may be necessary to prepare the files for viewing.

There are many other websites listed by Gizmo that have free comic books to view and download. With free resources such as these, it is easy for some of us to relive our childhood, while others may discover a forgotten but very entertaining resource.

Ira Wilsker is a member of the Golden Triangle PC Club as well as Director of the Management Development Program at Lamar Institute of Technology, in Beaumont, TX. He also hosts a weekly radio talk show on computer topics on KLVI News Talk AM560, and writes a weekly technology column for the Examiner newspaper <www.theexaminer.com>. Ira is also a police officer who specializes in cybercrime, and has lectured internationally in computer crime and security.

Tech Support Computer Humor



Tech Support: What kind of computer do you have?

Customer: A white one.
.....

Customer: Hi, this is Celine. I can't get my DVD out!!!

Tech Support: Have you tried pushing the button?

Customer: Yes, I'm sure it's really stuck.

Tech Support: That doesn't sound good; I'll make a note.

Customer: No, wait a minute, I hadn't inserted it yet. It's still on my desk ... sorry. Thank you.
.....

Tech Support: Click on the 'MY COMPUTER' icon on the left of the screen.

Customer: Your left or my left?
.....

Tech Support: Hello. How may I help you?

Male Customer: Hi ... I can't print.

Tech Support: Would you click on 'START' for me and ...

Customer: Listen pal; don't start getting technical on me. I'm not Bill Gates!!!
.....

Customer: Good afternoon, this is Martha. I can't print. Everytime I try, it says . . . 'CAN'T FIND PRINTER.' I even lifted the printer and placed it in front of the monitor, but the computer still says it can't find it!!!

7 Little Word Annoyances and Their Easy Fixes

By Nancy DeMarte, Columnist, Office Talk, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

March 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor

www.spcug.org / [ndemarte \(at\) verison.net](mailto:ndemarte@verison.net)

Below is a collection of frustrating things that can happen when using Microsoft Word. These annoyances can occur in any version of Word although most are geared to Word 2007 and 2010. In Word 2003, the fix-it steps may be different.

Annoyance 1: You accidentally press the Caps Lock key on your keyboard before typing a paragraph. When you finish, you find everything in capital letters.

The Fix: Rather than retyping the whole paragraph, highlight the text, then click the "Change Case" button (Aa), located on the Home tab in the Font group. Click "Sentence case" to transform your paragraph into normal sentences.

Annoyance 2: You create a party invitation with a light blue background (Page Layout tab - Page Color). But when you print it, the background is white.

The Fix: Office has set Word to not print full page background colors, probably to save users from wasting ink. You can, however, make the colored background print. Click the Office button, then Word Options -- Display. Put a check mark next to "Print background colors and images," then click OK. Until you remove this checkmark, all colored backgrounds will print.

Annoyance 3: You're working on a document where you've set the text size to be a fairly small 10 points. But you find that the text is too small to view comfortably while you're typing.

The Fix: Drag the Zoom slider located in the bottom right corner of the Word window to the right to enlarge the screen view of the text. When printed, the text will be 10 points no matter how big it appears on the screen.

Annoyance 4: You find that the spaces between lines of text in your document are wider than you want.

The Fix: If all the spaces are wider than expected, you can change the line spacing for the whole document at once. On the Home tab, in the Editing group, click Select -- All to highlight all the text. Next click the Line Spacing button in the Paragraph group and select 1.0 for single-spacing or one of the other choices.

Note: Word will not remove extra space after paragraphs when you choose a line spacing size. To remove extra space after a paragraph, select the paragraph before the extra space, click the Line Spacing button and choose "Remove Space After Paragraph." A more permanent way to create no extra space between paragraphs is to open the Paragraph group dialog box launcher (small diagonal arrow) on the Home tab and put a checkmark in front of "Don't add space between paragraphs of the same style."

Annoyance 5: Every time you type an email or web address into a document, it turns into a clickable hyperlink with underlined blue text, even if that isn't your intention.

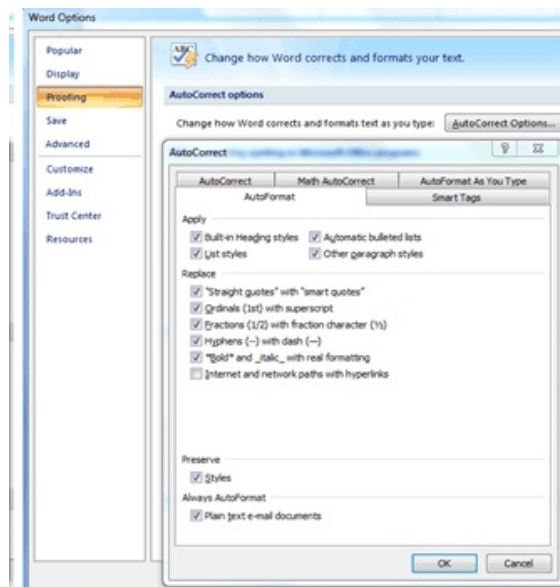
The Fix: The quickest fix is to right click the address and select "Remove Hyperlink." But this is only a one time remedy. To remove this action permanently, click the Windows button, then

this sequence: Word Options -- Proofing -- AutoCorrect Options -- AutoFormat As You Type. Remove the checkmark next to "Internet and Network paths with hyperlinks" and click OK.

Annoyance 6: You find that as you type, distracting wavy red and green lines show up under words and phrases.

The Fix: Word is set to check spelling (red lines) and grammar (green lines) as you type. This is another Proofing option which comes enabled from the factory. To turn off one or both of these features, go to Word Options (Office button - Word Options) and click Proofing. Remove the checkmarks next to "Mark grammar errors as you type" and "Check spelling as you type." You can always check spelling and grammar after your document is complete by clicking Spelling & Grammar at the left end of the Review tab.

Several of these fixes involve the settings found in the Options area of the Office 2007 menu (File menu in 2010). Options are available for all the Office programs (Word Options, Excel Options, Access Options, etc.) These default settings were determined by interviews with thousands of people who use Office regularly in the workplace. If you find that the factory settings are causing you more trouble than help, changing them is a simple task. All Office users should take a personal tour of the Options menus, which resemble this Word Options window with the AutoCorrect box open:



Annoyance 7: You often save documents to the same folder which is buried within other folders in My Documents. It takes several clicks to find this folder each time you want to open or save a document to it.

Fix 1: You can find almost any folder on your Windows Vista or 7 computer by typing its name into the Start Menu search box just above the Start button. Often it takes only a letter or two before the folder appears in the search results. On the downside, you have to do this each time you want to open the folder.

Fix 2: A way to make any folder immediately available is to add it to the Favorites section of the navigation pane. This pane appears on the left side of any explorer window where you are viewing, opening or saving files and folders. To make a folder a Favorite, start by creating or opening a file, like a document, and click Save As, which opens the Save As dialog box. This

reveals the navigation pane on the left, showing a list of possible places to save the file. Navigate to the folder you want to make a favorite so that it is the last item in the history bar across the top. Then right click the word Favorites in the left pane. From the drop down menu, click "Add current location to Favorites." Your special folder will now appear in the Favorites list. It will also appear in the Favorites list of the other MS Office programs on your computer, such as Excel and PowerPoint. To remove a folder from Favorites, right click the folder and select Remove.

Using a computer should be fun as well as useful. Take a few minutes to think what your personal computer annoyances are and try to find fixes for them. Customizing your programs makes using the computer much more enjoyable and efficient. ??

“The technician set up my laptop, now what do I do?”

By Gregory West, Member of the Computer Operators of Marysville and Port Huron, MI, and Sarnia Computer User Group, Canada

**<http://gregorywest.wordpress.com/>
[prospector16 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:prospector16@gmail.com)**



Ah, the wonderment of getting a new computer. No more having to watch others show off their computer skills as they demonstrate their new digital slide show, or listen about how they talk with relatives across three oceans for hours at no cost. With your new computer you are ready to join the online communities around the globe.

Three gigabytes of random access memory, 500 gigs of hard drive, a one year subscription to some antivirus / malware protection software utility and you are "good to go," says the clerk in the computer store.

"But does it come with a manual," you ask?

"The manual is in the OS software," the clerk says as he gets you to sign his copy of the credit card slip. "Have a nice day," he hollers as you lug the computer through the doors towards home.

"Ya right," you mutter under your breath

So many choices, too many decisions, but at least you finally get it home. Once you open the lid and go to turn on the new computer you realize that you have no idea what you are doing. In fact, you don't know a gigabyte from a Tyrannosaurus Rex, and you couldn't care less. All you want is to go on the Internet and check your email, surf some websites and maybe learn how to get those 265 photos from your digital camera.

"So now what," you say aloud to yourself? "Where do I begin," you ask your dog in desperation as she gives you that puzzled look.

There is an easy way to learn the various computer functions you need to catch up with your computer geek of a neighbour. First, you can take a formal course at your local college. These courses usually range from beginner to advanced. You can also take online courses (courses offered over the Internet), but this takes a special skill, as many people are not used to working alone and need to get out into a classroom set up with real humans. You can also join a local computer group. Here you will find people with similar interests who provide various seminars on tech-related issues.

I have been on a computer since 1972 where an IBM System/360 Operating System was the popular system in data processing centres. Over the years I have received computer training from all methods mentioned about. In fact, today I am taking two computer courses from books that came with DVD training programs



However, if you simply need to know one certain function on the computer, learn a software program, or how to troubleshoot a problem in your computer, I suggest Google's YouTube videos. Computer instructors, tech companies, libraries, schools and many knowledgeable individuals upload training videos to YouTube. Here you not only get free training, but targeted training. For instance, if you need to know how to install a USB flash drive in Windows 7, you simply go to youtube.com on the Internet and there will be many videos to help you

through this process.

One tip for searching within YouTube for help, try using the term: "tutorials" with your search. Sometimes this will give you a full training course on the particular subject you are interested in learning. I use YouTube all the time when I need help with a particular computer program. But it doesn't stop there either. I wanted to learn how to winterize my RV and save the hundred dollar fee, so I searched for videos on YouTube and have winterized my own trailer ever since for only the cost of antifreeze

Gregory West is a Mac Instructor for Lambton College. He is also Webmaster at Central United Church, the home of Sarnia's new Community Computer Training Centre at: <http://goo.gl/76H15>. This is free and open to the public as a community service. Learn at your own speed.

From Ray Nichols

If you have items you would be willing to donate for our club drawings, they will be gratefully accepted. Be sure to wear your name badge for the drawing.

Please also remember to bring your used magazines, books, videos, DVD's, and cassettes for distribution to Veterans in our area. If you have old household or device batteries, or used CFL (Compact Fluorescent Lamp) bulbs, bring them for legal recycling (it is against the law to dispose of them in the trash). Old Cellphones can be converted to Telephone Calling Cards for overseas Military Personnel. Old eyeglasses will be turned over to the Lions Club for reissuing to needy people



Smart Computing Tips
www.smartcomputing.com

Animate Menus

You can animate the drop-down menus for FrontPage, Word, and Access. To do this, right-click any visible toolbar and then choose Customize from the shortcut menu. In the Customize dialog box, click the Options tab. Click the Menu Animations drop-down arrow and then choose an effect (such as Slide or Unfold) from the list. Click Close to confirm your choice and use the menu animations.

Save Space

Some of us have small, cramped workstations, where our monitors eat up most of the desk space. Some of us have plenty of room, but simply want a clutter-free desk. Whatever the reason for wanting to clean up your desk space, a trackball mouse is an excellent, comfortable way to do it. A trackball directs the mouse pointer using an external ball that sits in a socket with sensors that detect the ball's movement. The ball is moved with the user's thumb, while the rest of the hand rests over the right and left click buttons and across the scroll wheel. Because the trackball doesn't need a flat surface on which to roll mechanically or with a laser, there is no need to take up desk space with a mouse pad. The trackball sits in one position while your thumb moves the mouse pointer. The space-saving mouse style is also useful for generally cramped working areas such as airplanes or coffee shop tables.

Quickly Enter A URL In IE

When you manually enter a URL in Internet Explorer, it can be a hassle to use your mouse to select the address bar, highlight the URL, and delete the current Web address. To expedite the process, press F6 on your keyboard and your cursor will automatically move to and highlight the current URL in the IE address bar. Because highlighted text is automatically deleted if other text is entered, you can simply type your new URL in the IE address bar.

Turn Off Your PC To Save

You don't work 24 hours a day (hopefully), so there's no need to leave your PC on all day. In addition to shutting your computer down at the workday's end, use standby or hibernate settings if you frequently step away from the computer throughout the day. As a rule, set these modes to kick in after 15 or 20 minutes of inactivity. Set the hard drive to hibernate after 30 minutes of nonuse. If you're using a screen saver, turn it off. Designed to lengthen the life of old CRT displays, screen savers aren't necessary with newer flat-panel LCDs. Some screen savers also draw on the graphics card, monitor, processor, and hard drive to function.

Online Radio

If you're tired of listening to your MP3 player or the set of CDs you have lying around your desk, try an online radio station. There's a variety of free Internet radio stations, so you can select a format that's both entertaining and helps you focus on work. One of our favorites is Pandora, which suggests songs you might like based on the songs or artists you tell Pandora to play. www.pandora.com

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The Club's Meeting Place

Our general meeting and the Random Access Special Interest Group are held at the Denny's at 1525 McHenry Avenue

Need help hooking up that new PC, or installing DSL-Cable?

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Modesto PC User Group Officers

President	Mike Kumler	531.2262	president@mpcug.net
Program VP	Jim Goodman	579.0122	sig@mpcug.net
Secretary	Terry Fix	524.8062	secretary@mpcug.net
Treasurer	Barbara Cameron	522.1389	treasurer@mpcug.net
Director-at-Large	John Selover		dal@mpcug.net

Appointed Positions

SIG Coordinator	Jim Goodman	579.0122	sig@mpcug.net
Press Relations	Elizabeth Leedom	523.4218	programvp@mpcug.net
Membership	Hank Mudge	529.1936	membership@mpcug.net
Webmaster	Jim Goodman	579.0122	webmaster@mpcug.net
Editor	Judy Taylour	661.252.8852	scvjudy@usa.net

PC Post

Editor Emeritus: William "Doc" Holloway – 1920-1996

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Join The Modesto PC User Group

To join MPCUG (or just get more information about us, go to our Website and fill out the new member form or mail your check to: MPCUG, P.O. Box 5122, Modesto, CA 95352-5122. Membership is just \$24 a year and includes 12 issues of the PC Post along with participation in all meetings and events. You will also receive E-mail advising you of extra events or news.

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