

# PC Post



Official Newsletter of the  
Modesto PC User Group.  
Modesto, California

30 YEARS OF USER HELPING USER

July 2012, Volume 30.7

## Save your Data to Microsoft's SkyDrive Windows 8

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MPCUG President Jim Goodman's computer hard drive "died" (Blue Screen) If this happens to you, what is your back-up plan or do you have one.

"Luckily, I had installed SkyDrive on my computer. The nice thing about SkyDrive is you can get access to data anyplace in the world, even if your computer is turned off."

"So now we can talk about a real problem and how I was able to survive a major hard drive failure using SkyDrive."

SkyDrive (officially Microsoft SkyDrive, formerly Windows Live SkyDrive) is a file hosting service that allows users to upload and sync files to a cloud storage and then access them from a Web browser or their local device. The service offers 7 GB of free storage for new users. SkyDrive Pro is an integral part of Office 2013!

Windows 8--will be available on Oct 26, 2012. At that time, the price of a Windows 8 Pro upgrade will be \$40.

Come & See a Mac computer running Windows 8  
Come & See a PC computer running Windows 8

*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 - August 1, 7pm at Ridgeway's*





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## Cell Phone Services Explained

When you want to purchase a cell phone, the first thing you have to decide is which hardware to buy. This is not an easy choice since each cell phone company has their own line-up of cell phones. A few, like the Apple iPhone, may be offered by several different companies. Most, however, are unique to each company. For instance, AT&T sells the HTC Inspire, Motorola Atrix, Samsung Focus and LG Phoenix, while Verizon sells the HTC Trophy, Motorola Droid Razr, Samsung Stratosphere, and LG Spectrum. All of these phones have a wide variety of features that you will want to compare before you purchase.



When you decide on a specific phone, you are also choosing an operating system. A regular cell phone will have the operating system used by its manufacturer. For instance a Nokia cell phone will have its own unique operating system and an LG will have their own. If you are looking for a smartphone, the major choices will be iOS (the Apple operating system), Android (Google's operating system), BlackBerry, and Windows Mobile. All are good, but each is entirely different.

Just like the features, the prices of cell phones vary greatly. Most of the major cell phone companies subsidize the cost of hardware when you sign up for a multi-year contract. Most companies require a two-year contract in order to get a lower rate for the hardware. For example, you can buy a 16GB, iPhone 4S from Verizon for \$649, but if you sign a two-year contract, you will only pay \$199. Other cell phone companies have similar offers and similar prices.

While that sounds like a great price reduction, you will pay for it in the end. Verizon's cheapest individual cell service plan is \$40 a month. For any smartphone, like the iPhone, their cheapest data plan, which you must purchase with your smartphone service, is \$30 a month. Using the example above, that means you will get the iPhone for \$199, but over the course of your two-year subscription, you will pay a minimum of \$1,680 for cell phone service. Oh, and that doesn't cover texting. Texts can cost up to 20 cents apiece unless you add a texting plan for at least \$10 more a month.

After you decide which cellular carrier and which hardware you want, you will also have to choose a service plan. There are separate plans for voice and data. Each voice and data plan has a limited amount of use.

For instance you can sign up for a voice plan that gives you anywhere from 300 minutes a month to over 2000 minutes a month. Voice plans are monitored by the minute meaning you are charged for each minute that you use. You are charged by the minute for calls coming in as well as calls going out. If you use all the minutes you are allowed in your plan for the month and continue to make and receive calls, you are charged an additional fee. Generally this overage fee is quite high. For example, if you have the 450 minute \$40 a month plan from Verizon you are paying about 9 cents a minute for your talk time. However, if you use more than 450 minutes, you are charged any additional minutes at 45 cents a minute.

The same is true of data, you are offered plans that cover a certain amount of data use, measured in gigabytes. If you are on a \$30 a month data plan from AT&T, you are allowed 3GB of data use. If you go over that limit, you will pay an additional \$10 for each GB or part of a GB that you use over your limit. While each company has similar charges, each may be slightly different.

Also each company may offer you a certain number of telephone numbers that you can call for free. This is usually called something like "Friends & Family". The number of friends and family in your list will vary depending on the company and service plan that you choose. With most plans and companies you can register either 5 or ten numbers for this free calling. Some companies also offer free calling at night and/or on the weekend. Two major companies, Verizon and AT&T offer free calling to others on their mobile network. So if you are on AT&T you can call other AT&T mobile numbers or they can call you without using any minutes. The same is true for Verizon. Also some companies, like AT&T, will allow you to roll over your unused minutes from one month to another. Others, like Verizon, will not.

If you decide to opt out of your contract before the end of the contract, you will pay an early termination fee. For the iPhone example that I used, the early termination fee is \$350. After a certain period of time, that fee is lowered by a certain amount. So you will pay less after you have been under the contract for 6-months and even less after you have been under the contract for a year, but you will still pay. For example AT&T charges a \$325 early cancellation fee and lowers that by \$10 for each full month of service.

In addition to signing a contract for cell service, most companies today have pre-paid and pay-as-you-go plans. With these plans, as well as with the contracts you sign, you have to be very careful.

As they say, the devil is always in the details. Just as an example, AT&T has a \$2 a day plan where you only have to pay for the day if you make or receive a call. The fine print here tells you that you also have to pay if anyone leaves you a voice message. So you may think that you have not used the phone for that day only to find out that you will be charged because some politician or crank caller left you a message.

Nobody ever said understanding the cell industry was easy, but if you want to own a cell phone and you want to get the most for your dollar, you will have to delve into the inner workings of the cell companies, their products, and their services. Without a doubt, there is a lot to know.

## Your Own Website

Bill Armstrong, Treasurer, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA

July 2012 issue, LVCG Journal

[www.lvcg.org](http://www.lvcg.org) / [armstrong\\_bill \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:armstrong_bill@yahoo.com)

Web addresses (URLs) are not just for businesses. Many individuals prefer to have their own family address, such as [armstrongfamily.org](http://armstrongfamily.org) (I made that up). Here are some things to think about when considering this approach.

There are two phases that both have to be completed:

- Get your own web address (a yearly charge)
- Get some business/ISP to host your address (a yearly charge)

Getting your own web address is accomplished by searching on the web for a web address vendor, such as <http://www.networksolutions.com>. They are the original authorized vendor (many others are now available). Here you may do a search to discover what addresses are available. Many URL extensions are now available, in addition to .com, .org, and .net.

Finding a business to host your site is easy also. Try Googling "web hosting" to find many. You might also consider local Internet Service Providers (ISPs).

You will have to inquire about the hosting costs. Most companies offer a low-cost hosting that includes basic services, such as email accounts, limited disk space for storage, etc.

In many cases, these two items merge into one, by companies that specialize in doing both and charging you one fee. Examples are:

- iPage
- BlueHost
- FatCow
- Inmotion
- Hub
- GreenGeeks
- JustHost.com
- HostMonster

Here's a website that reviews them and more: <http://www.top10hostinglist.com>

Most of these all-in-one sites offer ways for you to create a website for yourself. Their scripting services will assist you.

If, however, you want the ease of using Google Sites, as we do in the LVCG, that can also be done. Our website is [www.lvcg.org](http://www.lvcg.org), hosted by PAETEC (formerly Fast.net) and on it we have a "redirect script" that sends every visitor to our Google Sites website. We can have many people able to add and edit stuff, and customize it easily. Our webmaster, George Palmer, has given two classes recently about how to create your own site in Google Sites. You may find that it is easier to work in Google Sites than in the tools offered by the hosting site.

However, redirecting to Google Sites does not give you email services. You could check with the hosting companies to see if there is a way to redirect web-based traffic to another address (your Google Sites website), and still give you the ability to have, access and manage email services using your own web address.

Be careful of limited time offers. I saw one that was \$3.50 per month for the initial period, and then jumped to \$7-8 per month. It did include a free web address (URL), so that's probably still a good deal. Also review their "uptime" and "speed" statistics for the various sites.

Having your own website address is a nice feature, and many consider it well worth the expense. It is a little work to do the maintenance needed, but that is minimal.

## VIPRE

Presented at the Southwest Technology & Computer Conference, San Diego,  
by Dodi Glenn (with Kathy Wattman, Vipre Product Manager)

By Susan Kennedy, Member, TUGNET, California  
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What, you ask, is VIPRE? The name is an acronym for Virus Intrusion Protection and Remediation Engine. More simply, VIPRE by GFI Software Inc. (formerly Sunbelt Software) is a product line that includes both a stand-alone antivirus program and a more comprehensive internet security suite.



Dodi Glenn, Product Manager for GFI, started by asking us "What is malware? What dangers are out there?" Malware includes adware, bots, dialer programs, keyloggers, rogue anti-virus programs, rootkits, and spyware along with the usual viruses, worms and Trojans. He described malware as having "gone wild" with a huge increase in recent years. The purpose is no longer to damage people's computers; the motive today is almost 100% financial. Cyber criminals want access to your computer, your passwords and account information, and thus to your money! Besides stealing from your accounts directly, crooks make fortunes in selling credit card information. Much of this criminal activity originates in Russia and China.

Top threats include various forms of Java script. Some of the threats he named are the System Restore Rogue and S.M.A.R.T. Repair that may harm your hard disk drive.

A few threats created by governments have escaped into the world at large. We probably all know of the Stuxnet virus, believed to have been created to wreak havoc with Iran's nuclear program, but coming along today is Duqu, first spotted in September 2011. Another is Flame, a program developed by the CIA, NSA and Israeli military, to attack nukes in the Middle East. For those of you who are fluent in high-level "geek-speak," GFI produced a video (33 minutes) on their analysis of Flame at <http://vimeo.com/44382073>; it's pretty heavy on the technical stuff.

Another type of threat involves social engineering, and many of these come out of India. One example spoofs Microsoft's tech support center, where a person calls on the telephone to tell you of a problem with your computer that he can fix if you just allow him remote access. The Better Business Bureau published an article you can read at <http://tinyurl.com/7noulky>. You can also see videos on this threat on YouTube by searching for Microsoft Service Support Center.

Where does this malware come from? Today it's mostly social networking (e.g., Facebook), online games, and email or through "portals" you access either for games or chatting in forums. Malware (including spam) gets into your email through hacked web sites you visit, instant messages (such as posting on Facebook), and what are known as "exploits" in valid programs such as PDF, Java script, and Flash Player.

One threat few recognize is the "lost" flash drive. If you find a flash drive dropped in a parking lot or lying on a library table, for example, the natural instinct is to plug it in to a) see if the owner's name is available or b) just to see what might be on it. Don't do it! That drive may have been left intentionally because it was deliberately infected with malware (such as a keylogger or remote dialer) that will infect your computer when you try to access the info.

- Dodi then described the steps one should take if your computer becomes infected or you suspect it may be.
- Be sure you have a good up-to-date antivirus program on all machines before you access the internet.
- Scan all your machines if you are on a network.
- If you discover a worm or virus on one machine, unplug it from your network.
- Get VIPRE Rescue from <http://live.sunbeltsoftware.com> or <http://live.vipreantivirus.com>; then restart your machine in Safe Mode and run the Rescue program. When the report displays, any entries in red are serious threats that must be removed.
- Some other good anti-malware programs that Dodi recommends (many free) are Malware Bytes ([www.malwarebytes.org](http://www.malwarebytes.org))
- Super Anti-Spyware ([www.superantispyware.com](http://www.superantispyware.com))
- TDSS Killer ([www.super.kaspersky.com/](http://www.super.kaspersky.com/))
- ComboFix ([www.bleepingcomputer.com/download/anti-virus/combofix](http://www.bleepingcomputer.com/download/anti-virus/combofix)) and
- HijackThis (from any of several sites such as [www.majorgeeks.com](http://www.majorgeeks.com) or [www.filehippo.com](http://www.filehippo.com).)

How can you prevent these threats from getting to your computer?

- Keep Adobe Flash Player and Java updated.
- Disable Java scripts from running in Adobe.
- Disable the function that lets your browser open PDF files automatically.
- Keep your operating system patched and updated.
- Use a reliable anti-virus program or internet security suite.

Some other tips Dodi offered include:

- Don't click links that you find in emails or on web sites; or at least do so with great caution.
- Be very wary of attachments to emails, even from people you know. The bad guys may have "spoofed" your friend's email address and sent you malware.
- Use a "site advisor" such as Web of Trust or MacAfee's Site Advisor. These program



add-ons check web sites to see if they are safe and secure for you to visit. Web of Trust (WOT) ([www.mywot.com](http://www.mywot.com)) is one that works in all browsers. It is community driven; that is, it is run by its users. When you are checking a web site, a red circle means the web site is infected.

- Watch your mobile devices (tablets, smart phones, ebook readers) as carefully as your main computer. "Lookout" and VIPRE Mobile for Android are free programs for this. VIPRE Android also backs up your contacts and has a locator should you misplace your phone. (Kindle readers run on Android, but VIPRE Mobile is currently restricted by Amazon.)

A new threat is those ubiquitous QR codes that are popping up everywhere. The Norton security program warns of bad QR codes.

Following these tips will not protect you 100%-nothing can, but they will go a long way to keep your internet experience safe.

### If You Missed Your Favorite TV Show

By Ira Wilsker, Member, Golden Triangle PC Club, TX; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont, TX; Radio Show Host, Mondays, 6-7pm CT, [KLVI.com](http://KLVI.com)  
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#### WEBSITES:

<http://www.cbs.com/thanks/> (Free downloads until August 31)

<https://www.youtube.com/shows>

<http://www.hulu.com/recent/episodes>

<http://www.netflix.com>

With all of our busy lifestyles, we sometimes (often) miss some of our favorite TV shows. I am frequently asked by faculty and students how they can view both network and local TV shows that they missed. Since we are all not blessed with some type of DVR (Digital Video Recorder, such as a TiVO), and not everyone has a digital TV card in his computer that allows TV recording, it may be worthwhile to check the websites of the TV networks and local stations for the missed shows.

The commercial networks are not oblivious to the long-term financial stream that may flow with the continued online sale of TV shows, and most offer previously shown episodes online for a fee, sometimes bundled as an entire season. Local TV stations are often more generous, typically allowing for free viewing of previously broadcast local news and features while they are still on the local station websites. Some foreign websites have illicitly recorded copies of popular American TV shows which they allow to be downloaded for free or for a fee, an activity that is probably illegal, as it may be theft of intellectual property, and thus, should be avoided.

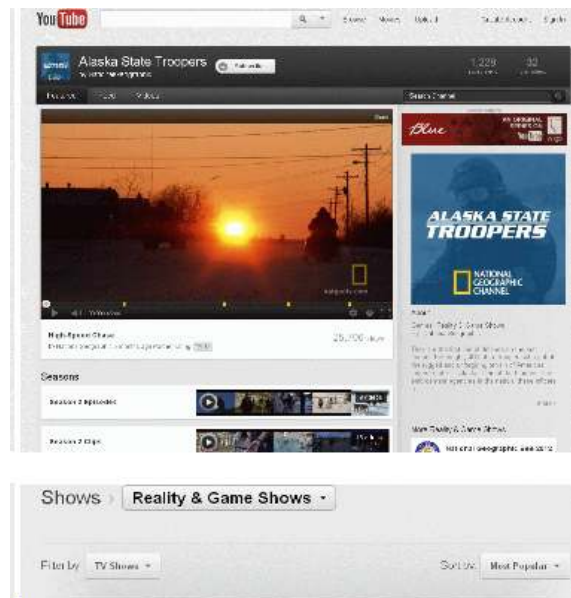
Recently the CBS network announced that a limited selection of full-length episodes of its primetime TV shows will be available for free download until August 31, 2012, from its website at [www.cbs.com/thanks](http://www.cbs.com/thanks). Among the free episodes that can be downloaded are: Blue

Bloods, Season 2, Ep. 12 "The Job"; CSI (Las Vegas): Crime Scene Investigation, Season 12, Ep. 12 "Willows in the Wind"; NCIS: Los Angeles, Season 3, Ep. 1 "Lange, H"; Hawaii Five-0, Season 2, Ep. 1 "Hai'ole"; The Best of I Love Lucy Volume 1, Ep. 17 "Job Switching" (1952); Twilight Zone Season 2, Ep. 6 "Eye of the Beholder" (1960); Survivor, Season 24 (One World), Ep. 1 "Two Tribes, One Camp, No Rules"; The Good Wife, Season 1, Ep. 1 "Pilot"; and CSI: NY, Season 08, Ep. 11 "Who's There?". All of these free episodes can be downloaded from iTunes, Amazon, or VUDU. While these episodes are presently available for free, the download sites also list almost all of the other episodes of these shows which may be viewed or downloaded for a fee, with some season bundles available for substantial discounts off of "à la carte" offerings.

A lot of users of Amazon have subscribed to its Prime service, which is best known for offering its members free second-day delivery of items shipped by Amazon. What they may not be aware of, is that Prime members can now also view hundreds of TV shows (and full length movies) without any additional charge via the Amazon streaming media service. At present, Amazon lists 1715 TV episodes (and over 2000 movies) which can be viewed at no additional charge by Prime members.

Google's YouTube ([www.youtube.com/shows](http://www.youtube.com/shows)) has thousands of both recent and classical TV shows and clips online from TV networks all over the world. YouTube lists the TV shows by genre' including Action & Adventure, Animation, Classic TV, Comedy, Documentary, Drama, Entertainment, Food, Nature, News, Reality & Game Shows, Science Fiction, Soaps, Sports, Travel, and other topics.

For those who may have missed the news, most local and network news programs have video segments or stories available online shortly after they are broadcast. Going to the websites for ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox News, CNN, and other news networks will display the extensive number of video news segments and complete news broadcasts that are available online. Almost all local TV news shows have extensive video libraries available online for later viewing Hulu, [www.hulu.com/recent/episodes](http://www.hulu.com/recent/episodes), has about 2000 recent TV episodes of all types available for free, including the TV Sunday news hours, reality shows, comedies, news magazines, drama, soaps, cartoons, sports, and several other show types. Hulu TV shows can be sorted by genre', air date, or by most recent episodes added to Hulu. It is interesting how many episodes are posted to Hulu by their networks on a typical day; as an example for Friday June 22, Hulu added 25 daily episodes, while on Thursday, June 21, Hulu added 35





episodes from that date. On Friday, Hulu added Late Night with Jimmy Fallon, General Hospital, Days of Our Lives, ABC News 20/20 (Rielle Hunter interview), Jay Leno, Friday Night SmackDown (wrestling), ABC NightLine, Good Morning America, The View, and 15 other episodes; several of the other episodes are in Spanish. Thursday also added the Daily Show with John Stewart, The Colbert Report, Saving Hope, Jimmy Kimmel, ABC World News Tonight with Diane Sawyer, Charlie Rose, several shows in Spanish, and several other episodes. Hulu also includes shows from the Food Network, A&E, BET, Bloomberg, Bravo, CNBC, Comedy Central, Fox Business, FX, Golf TV, HGTV, History Channel, Military History, MSNBC, MTV, NBC, Spike, Starz, USA Network, WWE, and dozens of other foreign and domestic TV networks and channels.

Millions of people subscribe to Netflix ([netflix.com](http://netflix.com)) which has an extensive library of both recent and past TV shows and series. While visiting a relative that had a Netflix account I watched several oldies on his computer, including Rat Patrol, classic westerns, old TV comedies, and a few other old TV shows.

If I miss a news show or story, I usually check the station or network website first where I can often view the news that I missed. Hulu and YouTube are typically my next choices, and they often meet with success. Sometimes, if it is a TV show, I will check the network website as they frequently indicate the date that a particular show will be repeated, giving me a second chance to view it.

Not having a DVR, all is not always lost if I miss a favorite TV show.

*Ira Wilsker is the 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](http://www.theexaminer.com)>. Ira is also a police officer who specializes in cybercrime, and has lectured internationally in computer crime and security.*

## Text or “Texting” - Have you tried it?

Phil Sorrentino, Member, Sarasota PCUG, FL

July 2012 issue, PC Monitor

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If you're under 20, you probably know all of this, and if you're over 60, you probably think you have no need for texting (unless you want to keep in contact with someone who is under 20), so for all of you in between, here goes. Texting is a very interesting, and relatively easy, way to communicate with others, using your cell phone.

Texting refers to the exchange of brief text messages between cell phones, over a network. SMS or Simple Message Service is what provides the ability to send these messages via the cell phone network. Today, all the Wireless carriers provide Texting service, typically at a cost of about 20 cents per text (both incoming and outgoing), unless you have a specific texting plan. Texting plans can include unlimited texting or a specific number of texts per

month. Texts, unlike voice calls, cannot be rejected or dismissed; when a text is sent to you, you pay for it, whether you wanted it or not.

A text message consists of a series of any of the 26 letters of the alphabet, the 10 numerals, and some special characters (like the space), up to 160 characters long. SMS specifies that text messages are to be 160 characters or less. (You may remember that Twitter, which is based on SMS, limits its “tweets” to 140 characters; this is because Twitter uses 20 characters for addressing of messages.)

Most text messages are typically short, and a sort of “short-hand notation” has developed to allow abbreviations or short collections of



alpha-numeric characters to convey a longer thought. Some of these may be familiar and some maybe not so much. For a comprehensive list see:

<http://www.netlingo.com/acronyms.php> Some examples are: ASAP As soon as possible, BBFN Bye Bye for now, BFF Best Friends Forever, BTW By the way, CYM Check your mail, NUFF Enough said, GF Girl Friend, C4N Ciao for now, B4 Before, GTG Got to go, IDK I don't know, ILU I Love You, IMHO In my humble opinion, J/K Just kidding, L8R Later, M4C Meet for coffee, OMG Oh my god, P911 Parent alert, LOL Laughing out loud, P2C2E Process too complicated to explain, C-P Sleepy, SLAP Sounds like a plan, TGIF Thank god it's Friday, TG2BT Too good to be true, U2 You too.

Texting can be done from any cell phone that has the ability to send alpha-numeric characters, but if you don't have a phone with a keyboard, texting can be very difficult and tedious. On a phone with only 16 or so buttons, the buttons have to be pressed sequentially in a certain pattern to get the alpha or special characters, (sending a “C” may require pressing the 2 key 4 times followed by a specific key), which makes sending even some of the very short abbreviations very difficult to accomplish with any speed and accuracy. On a phone with a keyboard, texting becomes a much simpler activity. Just find the characters on the keyboard (usually with either of your thumbs), and put together the message, with or without the short-hand notation, making sure to stay within the 160 character limitation.

Although texting was originated using only SMS, today texting can handle pictures, video and sound using the MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service). MMS extends the SMS capability to include these multimedia file types. MMS has become the typical way to share pictures and even videos among cell phones.

Today, text messaging is the most widely used mobile data service, others being voice and email. In the United States, in December 2009, there were 286 million US text message subscribers and they sent 152.7 billion text messages per month, for an average of 534 messages per subscriber that month. Another survey found in May 2010 that 72% of U.S. adult cell phone users have sent or received a text message. Spurred by the unlimited texting plans offered by carriers like AT&T and Verizon Wireless, American teenagers sent and received an average of 2,272 texts per month in the fourth quarter of 2008, almost 80 messages a day, more than double the average of a year earlier.

Text messaging is most often used between cell phone users, as a substitute for voice calls in situations where voice communication is either, impossible, difficult, or not necessary. (In some regions of the world, text messaging is significantly cheaper than placing a phone call to

another cell phone; but in general, text messaging is popular for its convenience, despite the low cost of voice calls.

One of the unfortunate down sides to texting is texting while driving. Texting while driving leads to increased distraction behind the wheel. In 2006, a survey with more than 900 teens from over 26 high schools showed that 87% of the students found texting to be "very" or "extremely" distracting. A later study by AAA discovered that 46% of teens admitted to being distracted behind the wheel due to texting. Please: **Never Text While Driving.**



Texting even has its own etiquette. One example is: "Keep your message brief." No one wants to have an entire conversation by texting when a call would be more appropriate. Another example is: "Don't use all Caps." Typing a text message in all capital letters will appear as though you are shouting at the recipient, and should be avoided. And a last one "Only send texts to people who you think will appreciate them, otherwise use e-mail, or even voice-mail."

So B4 I go let me say that IMHO texting is GTK NUFF LOL



## The Tip Corner

By Bill Sheff, Novice SIG Coordinator, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA  
 May 2012 issue, The LVCG Journal  
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Support for Windows XP with Service Pack 2 (SP2) ended on July 13, 2010. And that means if you're running this version after support ends, you won't get security updates for Windows. How do you know which version of the Windows operating system you are running? Here's how to check. Click the Start button, type winver in the search box, and then press Enter. If that doesn't do it click Start, click Run, type winver, and then press Enter. If you are still using XP, congratulations. You have managed to avoid some of the perils and problems found in Vista, but make sure your version of XP is still supported (with SP3) because you do not want to run a version of Windows that is no longer supported.

An unsupported version of Windows will no longer receive software updates from Windows Update. These include security updates that can help protect your PC from harmful viruses,

spyware, and other malicious software, which can steal your personal information. Windows Update also installs the latest software updates to improve the reliability of Windows—new drivers for your hardware and more.

You should always install the latest service packs for Windows. You can download and install these through Windows Update. With laptops, notebooks and tablets all around you, perhaps it is time to consider a move into Windows 7. This will insure you have the capability to handle the latest devices and hard drives which may not work well with XP.

### **Spring (or Summer) Cleaning Time is Here**

A few of the following tasks might require you to open your computer, so the first item of business is to have an anti-static strap. They cost about six bucks and will protect the electronic components from a possible surge. It doesn't take much. The 110 volts that comes into your computer is split into a lot of five and ten volts signals, so it does not take much to fry something.

**MEMORY:** One of the cheapest and easiest ways to gain a little speed is by adding memory. Make sure you get the right stick(s) of memory. They are usually installed as pairs of the same capacity. A free tool to scan your computer, identify your chips and tell you what you need is located at: ([www.crucial.com/systemscanner](http://www.crucial.com/systemscanner)). You can even buy the chips online at this site.

**EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE:** An external drive gives you lots of extra storage without opening your case. It can be used to back up your internal hard drive or even make an image of it. Small size but large capacity drives are available from Western Digital and others. Two TB (terabyte) drives are available for around \$150, can fit in your pocket and do not even need external power. Since there are so many choices check out [tinyurl.com/mybv84lz](http://tinyurl.com/mybv84lz) for help.

**INTERNAL HARD DRIVE:** Running an internal drive is usually faster than an external drive but there could be power supply issues. Go to [tinyurl.com/2za8kj](http://tinyurl.com/2za8kj) for help.

**VIDEO CARD:** If you do heavy audio or video or picture editing a more powerful card can speed up a lot of painting on the computer. New Egg has an online calculator which will tell you if your computer has enough power to handle the card you select. Again, go to [tinyurl.com/34mmnpe](http://tinyurl.com/34mmnpe).

You should also use the manual that came with the computer, or go online to download one from the manufacturer.

**CLEANUP:** Get a free copy of CCleaner. The newest version will clean up caches, cookies, recycle bin, registry and more. The pane on the left allows you to pick cookies that shouldn't be removed (for sites that you visit regularly). After that you can do a defrag or just let the computer do it automatically the next time it is scheduled to run.

## Back to Basics- Mouse Speak

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July 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor  
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Using your mouse to use your computer is really quite essential. And being able to understand your mouse is a big part of computer communication. Let's review the basic ways to use a mouse and the terms people use to describe its use. And I will even throw in some helpful tips too. People will use "mouse-speak" to try to help you use your computer so you need to understand the lingo.

Simply moving your mouse on your table or mouse pad will move the mouse arrow (or pointer or mouse cursor) to anyplace on your monitor screen that you want. Every mouse has a left and right button, and some mice (mouses?) have a scroll wheel as well. You should have a mouse that is comfortable for you to use. To avoid wrist problems it is best to keep your hand-wrist-forearm all in the same straight line and a wrist support is a good idea. Here are the common mouse terms and what they mean:

**"Click on..."** – If someone tells you to "click on" something on your monitor screen, they mean move your mouse so that the mouse cursor or arrow is pointing to whatever it is, then press the LEFT mouse button once quickly. In most cases clicking on something will select it, open a menu of choices or execute a menu command. People or computer books may say something like: "click on (or "go to") start - control panel - appearance and personalization - display - adjust resolution". What they are giving you is a list of specific things to click on and the order in which to do it. You cannot get to the end result without clicking on each step along the way.

**"Double click on..."** – This means to click the LEFT button of your mouse twice quickly on whatever it is. For example, to start a program from your desktop screen you would "double-click" on the program icon to open that program. Double-clicking usually opens a new window or opens a file. Double-clicking always means the LEFT mouse button. It is very important that you do NOT move the mouse the slightest between the clicks! Some people have hand problems and cannot hold the mouse still when they double-click. If this is a problem for you, try holding the mouse still with one hand and hitting the mouse button twice with the other hand.

**"Drag..."** – If you ever played solitaire on your computer (and you should to practice using the mouse) then you probably have "dragged" a playing card from one place to another on your screen. So "dragging" something means placing your mouse arrow on whatever it is you want to drag, then HOLD DOWN the LEFT mouse button while you move the mouse. Whatever your mouse arrow is on will move with your mouse to the new location. Besides dragging playing cards you can drag things like files from one folder to another or drag highlighted text to another location.

**"Right-click on..."** – This means clicking the RIGHT mouse button, not the left. In almost all cases right-clicking the mouse will bring up a menu of options for whatever it was that you



right-clicked on. For example, if you right-click on an empty area of your desktop screen you will get a menu of choices of what you can do with your desktop. If you right-click on a file name you will get a menu of options of what you can do with that file, etc. Get it? Right-clicking can be very helpful to get to options when you do not have a menu bar or other ways of making some selections.



**“Hover”** – moving your mouse on something, such as an icon or menu ribbon item, and leaving your mouse on that object for a moment, like a helicopter hovering over something on the ground. This may display a small text box with a description of what that object is. You do NOT click to do this, “hovering” the mouse is just resting the mouse cursor on something.

The **“Scroll wheel”** is used by rotating (i.e. spinning) it up or down. If your mouse does not have a scroll wheel, it’s no big deal. A scroll wheel will do the same thing as the scrollbar – move your view up or down in your window. So, if you are viewing a web page or a document, the scroll wheel is another way to move your view up or down. In some programs the scroll wheel will zoom-in or zoom-out of whatever is displayed on your screen. Map and photo programs usually use the scroll wheel this way.



Well, those are the basics. But it wouldn’t be fun for me if I stopped here. Did you know you can change the functions of your mouse buttons in the Windows Control Panel? (In Windows 7 go to start - control panel - hardware and sound – and then click on “mouse” under “devices and printers”.) Here you can see and change many mouse options. One thing you can do is switch the left and right mouse buttons. PLEASE do not do that! Can you imagine how confused someone else would be trying to use your mouse? Well, it could be pretty funny. But maybe you would like to shorten or lengthen the time needed between your “double-clicks.” You can do that and practice your double-click speed there.

### **SOME HELPFUL MOUSE TIPS**

I like using my LEFT hand to use the mouse, not my right. That way my index finger is only over the left mouse button, the one I use most, and there is NO finger over the right mouse button. Some people have difficulty moving only one finger and sometimes hit BOTH the left and right mouse button at the same time when doing a left-click. This is not good and really confuses the computer and people. Using your left hand prevents this from happening. Also, this leaves my right hand free to write or do something else.

Is your wireless mouse not working? – Check the battery!

When moving the mouse arrow, it is the very tip of the arrow that matters. Even if most of the mouse arrow is on something else, it is only the tip of the arrow that is important. By the way, you can change the size of your mouse arrow through the control panel.

Speaking of changing, you may notice that your mouse “arrow” may change to a hand, an “I” bar, a cross, or some other image depending upon what program you are using or where you are in the window. Do not panic, it is still your mouse cursor. For example, when you move

your mouse to an area where there is text your mouse cursor will change to an “I-bar” which helps you position your insertion point between two specific letters.

**Do you have a LAPTOP?** – Laptop computers usually have a “mouse-pad” or “touch-pad” built in. This is helpful if you have no other mouse. This built-in mouse-pad however can cause problems. Different places on this pad can have different functions. For example, the right edge of the mouse-pad may act like a scroll-wheel when you drag your finger up or down near that edge. When using the keyboard on most laptops my lower thumb joint hits the mouse-pad and some really funny things happen, like my mouse arrow jumping all over the place. I recommend that you turn off your mouse-pad on your laptop and use a small wireless mouse instead. Your laptop instructions should tell you how to turn off your mouse-pad.

Using a mouse is easy once you get used to it. If you really want to have fun with your mouse, try the Paint program that comes free with Windows. Here is how to get to the Paint program using your mouse: Go to Start – All programs – Accessories – Paint. See – you can now understand Mouse-Speak.

## Computer Humor



It does exist!!

### From Ray Nichols

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