

# PC Post



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30 YEARS OF USER HELPING USER

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## Inside this Issue

|  |    |
|--|----|
| e-Book Prices Coming Down                      | 2  |
| It's almost here..when?...soon...when is soon? | 3  |
| Document Your Life with Photo-Graphic Memory   | 5  |
| Wi-Fi on the Road                              | 8  |
| Internet Forensics                             | 9  |
| The Tip Corner                                 | 10 |
| Extending the Life of Your XP PC               | 13 |
| Computer Humor                                 | 17 |
| Ads  | 18 |
| Officers                                       | 19 |

## Protecting Yourself Your Computer and Your Identity

It's common wisdom that avoiding suspicious web-based content and especially 'dodgy' websites will keep you safe on the Internet. Unfortunately, that sort of information is 'old and outdated technology'. Internet security (protecting both your computer and your identity online) can, however, be demystified. This presentation focuses on normal computer users, rather than "IT geeks," and clearly explains security myths, Internet dos and don'ts, the evolution of computer threats, and more. Join presenter Bob Gostischa, as he simplifies, clarifies, and demystifies your computer, making your Internet experience a safe one.

AARP has approved Bob's presentation!

Bob enjoys his retirement as an enthusiast IT security expert, most notably for Avast Software. Avast is the creator of avast! antivirus software. The avast! website has a discussion and help forum, where Bob has been helping with security-related issues since 2004, having contributed over 17,000 forum interactions. avast! is one of the most popular antivirus softwares in the world. Avast has been making security software for over 20 years and has more than 160 million users worldwide.



*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 - October 3, 7pm at Ridgeway's*

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## e-Book Prices to Come Down

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If you love e-books, you will be glad to hear that the price of e-books has started to plummet. This is because of happenings at an unlikely source, the United States Justice Department. You will want to read on to learn about this.

You may have heard that the Justice Department filed suit against five major book publishers and Apple last April. The suit accused these entities of working in collusion to raise the cost of e-books. This comes from a policy that publishers adopted in 2010 when they struck a deal with Apple to allow the publishers, and not the retailers, to set prices of e-books. Of course, this became the norm for other retailers like Amazon. Before that time, Amazon was setting low prices on current best-sellers to grab customers. It was sort of a loss-leader program like grocery stores that entice people to come in with a low advertised price on a popular item like milk or bread.



Well, to make a long story short, this week Denise L. Cote, the federal district judge in Manhattan who is overseeing the case, approved a settlement between the Justice Department and three of the country's largest publishers, Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins Publishers and Simon & Schuster. Although the suite is still ongoing with Pearson, Macmillan, and Apple, this settlement will allow the pricing to return to the days when retailers set the prices of e-books. This could happen quite quickly as the settlement will allow current agreements to be canceled within 30 days.

Although this settlement is poised to throw the entire publishing world into turmoil, it is a big win for Amazon, whose low prices set off this whole configuration in the first place. It is also a big win for consumers who have over the course of the past few years paid tens of millions of dollars more for ebooks than they otherwise would have.

I recently tried to purchase an e-book. The price was \$12.99. The same book in paperback was only \$9.00, so I purchased the paperback. I realize that with e-books, there are still authors and publishers to be paid, but with no printing costs and lower distribution costs, it is illogical to think that a printed book should be cheaper than a digital copy of the same book. Oh, and I won't even get into the fact that digital books are licensed, not sold, so you are not even really buying a book, you are simply buying the right to read that book.

Publishers and companies like Apple are simply used to having large profit margins and will do everything they can maintain those margins. Yet, when technology moves the world ahead, being stuck on old methodology does not always work. A good example of this is Kodak. Did you know that Kodak was actually the first to develop the digital camera? Yet, they didn't make the move to digital technology in a timely manner because they didn't want to sabotage their extremely lucrative film business.

There is no doubt that the publishing industry must change to meet the new digital world. Amazon will be a big winner in this and hopefully the publishers and book retailers will be adaptable enough to find a way to compete with Amazon. If that happens, the consumer will be a big winner.

NOTE: The changes are coming quickly. This week I found an e-book at both Amazon and iTunes for \$9.99. Last week that same book was \$17.99.

It's almost here...when?...soon...when is soon?

by Lou Torraca, President

The TUG MOAA Computer User Group, Hawaii

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For those who follow computer news, you probably know that "it" is Windows 8, Microsoft's latest, and from many reports, best OS. Before I tell you a bit more about 8, I have a suggestion. I know some of you are considering getting an iPad...my suggestion is wait. Microsoft recently introduced their answer to iPad called Surface, but not all the details are out there yet. So, I would also suggest u take a look at:

<http://www.microsoft.com/surface/en/us/default.aspx>



The picture, above shows some of the options available.

Whenever a new Windows operating system (OS) comes out, we inevitably find ourselves wondering if it's worth the hassle of upgrading. What will it cost to upgrade? The good news is the two recent options that Microsoft announced. If you are in the market, right now, for a new PC, you will be able to upgrade to Windows 8 pro when it's released (all the indications are that it will be released in October) for \$15. And, for those who want to upgrade from Vista, XP or 7, it's \$40. Will you lose all your favorite features? So now that Windows 8 is imminent, we have to ask ourselves if it will be that much better than Windows 7 (or even Windows XP, for those of us who never bothered upgrading last time). TECCA asked those same questions and dug through the reviews to find some answers. What can you expect from Windows 8? Is it time for you to make a change?

### **1. Unified PC, tablet, and smartphone**

Windows 8 aims to successfully unify all your devices, from your PC to you tablet to your smartphone. While this claim may sound too good to be true, so far, it looks like a promise Microsoft will keep.

Earlier this year, Samsung showed off a tablet running Windows 8 at the 2012 Consumer Electronics Show. And during an event held in June, the company presented a duo of tablets collectively called the Microsoft Surface. (See my comment, above.) The more basic of the two runs Windows 8 RT, one of three flavors of Windows 8. The more high-end version built with professionals in mind runs Windows 8 Pro.



Unfortunately, current Windows smartphones won't be upgradeable to Windows 8. But if you do get a Windows 8 smartphone, tablet, and computer in the future, you'll be able to sync your Metro user interface (UI) apps, among other things, across devices. You can even access your computer and your mobile devices using the same login details.

## 2. The all-new Metro user interface



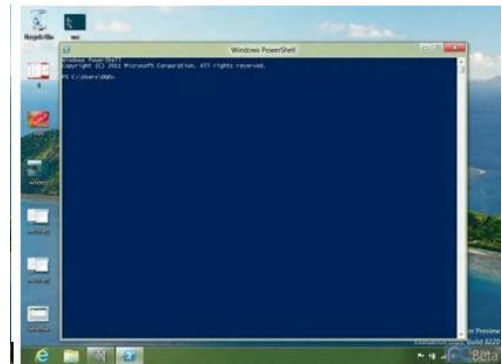
We mentioned the Metro UI above, but what is it exactly? Previous versions of the Windows operating system feature similar aesthetics, but Windows 8 looks drastically different. The Metro UI displays Windows 8 apps right on your home screen as a mosaic of tiled boxes of different sizes, shapes, and colors. These tiles represent everything from apps running in the background to incoming email and messages to shared photos.

photos.

The app tiles update in real time for events including Twitter messages and upcoming calendar events. Metro UI renders well on tablets, especially since if you own a tablet, you're already used to swiping between home screens. But on computers, you have to get used to scrolling sideways to get to the home screen where you placed the app you want to launch.

## 3. More energy-efficient than Windows 7

According to a test by Tom's Guide, Windows 8 uses less power than Windows 7, keeping your laptop running longer. Windows 8 is configured to save battery life by dropping to a low-power state (longer than Windows 7 can) when you're not doing anything power-intensive. It also shuts down ports you're not using rather than running them needlessly.



## 4. Speedier performance



Is Windows 8 faster? The answer is a resounding yes. The Consumer Preview version of Windows 8 has so far proven to be faster than older Windows versions in various speed tests. In fact, Lifehacker found that Windows 8 boot times can be up to 25 seconds faster than Windows 7 boots, and the new OS can pretty much do most tasks a smidge faster than the older OS. Sure, it's just a few seconds shaved off, but those few seconds are pretty noticeable when you spend a lot of time on the computer.

### 5. Easier to use with multiple monitors

If you decide you want a computer setup comprised of more than one monitor, then Windows 8 may be the operating system that will work best for you. Designed with multi-monitor use in mind, it lets you customize your taskbar settings for each monitor or open window. Microsoft even lets you customize a different desktop background for each monitor or stretch one image over multiple monitors. You'll also be able to run slide shows over multiple screen screens.



### 6. Limited third-party browser access

Recent reports indicate that Windows 8 RT, one of the platform's versions meant for use on devices with ARM processors such as one of the Surface tablets, could limit third-party internet browsers. Those of you who prefer Firefox or Chrome over Internet Explorer may be out of luck. This has yet to be confirmed as of this writing, but keep it in mind if you're buying a new Windows computer or tablet in the future.

### 7. No support for Windows XP by 2014

Windows 7 and Windows XP are two of the most popular operating systems at the moment. If you're running Windows 7, you're probably fine until 2020, but if you're an old XP faithful, you might have to rethink your position and upgrade to Windows 8 soon. As of April 2014, Microsoft plans to stop supporting Windows XP.

So, there u have it...it's up to u to decide. Whatever your decision, have fun and be careful out there on the www.

Aloha, Lou

Check out Lou's Technology in Plain English articles at Around Hawaii / Oceanic time Warner's Community Website

[http://www.aroundhawaii.com/technology\\_in\\_plain\\_english.html](http://www.aroundhawaii.com/technology_in_plain_english.html)

Document Your Life with Photo-Graphic Memory  
By Phil Sorrentino, Member, Sarasota PCUG, FL  
September 2012 issue, PC Monitor  
[www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org) / [spcugedit \(at\) verizon.net](mailto:spcugedit@verizon.net)



A photographic memory is probably something we all would like. And, just think, you can have at least the effect of a photographic memory just by using your camera and your computer to document your activities... your life.

It is amazing how much paper we collect along the way. Most of it goes neatly into file folders and then those folders go neatly into multi-draw filing cases or boxes. Before you know it you have multiple multi-draw filing cases in the den, the home office and/or the bedroom closet. Have you ever looked at the pile of paper you have collected over these many years? It's not a pretty picture. Now there are some things that we just have to hang on to, like licenses,

automobile registrations, titles of any sort, and certain special papers that might have an emotional or historical attachment. But the rest of the pile might be eliminated or at least pared down. (And how about old tax forms? How many years do you have to keep the paper? Or is an electronic copy good enough for taxes paid 10 years ago?)

What I'm suggesting is that with your computer, and a scanner and a camera, you can probably cut the paper you need to save down to a very manageable size, and even



eliminate some of those storage cases. The scanner is really the key here. The camera is for unusually large items, or those things that just can't be copied on a flat-bed scanner.

Consider this, review the contents of some of those folders and if you need to know that something occurred, and is relevant, like an award you were given from your last employment. If you have not looked at it since you received it, then you can probably scan it

in and throw away the original. I know how difficult this will be for some people, but after a little practice it will get a lot easier. (A very important thing here is that you have adequate "backup" to guarantee that you will never lose the scanned in files. If you don't have adequate backup, which means multiple copies of the data files of the scanned objects, than this is not going to be a good idea. So before you commit to this, make sure you have a good backup plan in place.



Make sure that you can guarantee at least two if

not three copies of the scanned in files. The first two copies could be two external or portable disk drives and the third might be on DVD, flash memory device, or in the Cloud.) Once the backup plan is in place and you are really using it, the fun begins. Gather your papers, separate the ones that you have to keep and make a pile of those that can be shredded after they are scanned. Do you really need those greeting cards you received 15 years ago?



In order to make sure that you can retrieve any of these "documents", it is good to establish a naming convention before you start to scan the paper documents; after all, it is no use to have all the data if you can't access it quickly. As you collect your scanned documents, you will be creating a database. Two popular ways of organizing your database are 1- by date, and 2- by event. If every file that you want to keep has a name starting with "yyyy-mm-dd" and is followed by a descriptive name, then when the digital files are put in a digital folder, they will organize in a chronological fashion. yyyy represents the year, like 2011, mm represents the numerical value of the month like 04 for April, and dd represents the day of the month like 01 for April 1. (For some databases only the year and month may be adequate.) Now, when you go looking for a document, all you have to know is the date associated with the item, and you can just look in the chronological order to find it. Let's say that if you scanned in an award that you received in June 1976, then you would look in the

area of 1976-06, to find that document. Windows Explorer makes it easy to find scanned documents because it shows a thumbnail photo of the file, while you are searching for the file. This is especially helpful because a scanned file is usually saved as a .jpg file, a picture file.

If you do use this naming convention, then you can organize your folders to represent either years (or groups of years), or events. If you choose to be completely chronological, then the folders will be named 1970, 1971, 1972,... you get the idea. Then you could put the 1970s folders into a folder named 1970s, and you could do the same with all other decades. If you choose to organize around events, then the folders might have names like "awards", "house info", "car info", "career",.. - really, any collection of events or things that makes sense to you and any others who will use the database.

Besides your scanned in documents, you can include photos from your digital camera. If you use the same naming convention with your photos, then you can mix them in with the documents and they all will organize in chronological order. Sometimes that makes a lot of sense when you have both pictures and documents that are part of the same event. This combination sometimes helps tell the complete story of the activities of the specific event.

Another way to organize your database is to organize your folders around event; then you might name your folders "birthdays", "anniversaries", "parties", "weddings",... you get this idea too. So these would represent those types of events throughout the years. The fact that the files are chronologically named means they would organize chronologically inside the folders, making it easy to find a specific event within an event folder. And you can mix the two types of database folders. You could have your basic folders chronologically named, but inside a year you might have a series of events like "a vacation trip to the Grand Canyon" where the pictures from the trip would show what you saw and the documents you collected like maps and brochures from the particular destinations. As long as each file is chronologically named, the files will organize in a way that will make it easy for you to find a specific document, or group of pictures.

Not only do you save storage space, but once your pictures and documents are in your database, they are immediately available because they are literally at your finger tips (if your fingers are on the keyboard). I bet you'll be able to impress your friends how fast you can find those awards you received from your first employer. Of course there are always a few items that just can't be committed to electronic files and there are always a few pictures of the grandchildren that just must be made into an 8 by 10 for the wall. But, just think, with a lot of those paper documents shredded, and all of your photos committed to digital files, you won't need all of that paper and picture storage. It will probably free up some valuable storage space and maybe you can even make a few bucks by selling those filing cabinets.

**Burn images**

Windows 7 introduced a feature that other operating systems have had for years - the ability to burn ISO images to CDs or DVDs. And it couldn't be much easier to use. Just double-click the ISO image, choose the drive with the blank disc, click Burn and watch as your disc is created.

## Wi-Fi on the Road

Hewie Poplock, APCUG Director, VP, Central Florida  
Computer Society

<http://www.hewie.net> / Hewie (at) Hewie.net



In the past, finding free Wi-Fi away from home was difficult, if not impossible. However, most of the fast food restaurants and many other locations now make Wi-Fi available. If that is true, and it is, that should be the end of my article.

However, in a recent column by a local newspaper, there is a growing issue of quality of that Wi-Fi. I have found McDonalds' connections consistently good. It has the AT&T name and their hotspots seem to be maintained.

I recently stopped at a Burger King, which had a sign advertising Free Wi-Fi. After I ordered my food and sat down, I could not find their hotspot. When I approached the employees, including the shift manager, my response was, "Oh, it doesn't always work." I guess this was one of those times.



While I was there, I noticed a man who was bringing in his laptop and a printer to use the Wi-Fi to send a report to his boss. He set up on the floor as there was not a table near the electrical outlet.

Once he was set up, he also approached the employees about getting on line, without any more help than I had received. I told him where the nearest McDonalds' was located.

That brings me to my point. While many of these restaurants have Wi-Fi, the quality or the consistency of it working is not always reliable. To compound that, one of my friends pointed out that he recently stopped at a McDonalds, only to discover that his laptop battery was dead, and that particular location had no electrical outlets. The manager stated that they may be doing a remodel of the location and hopefully they will add some outlets.

Our computer user group has some meetings at a couple of local Denny's Restaurants, which also advertise inside & out that they have free Wi-Fi. One of our special interest groups meets at one Denny's every month and has been doing so for several years. For several months we could no longer use their Wi-Fi, if were available at all. The manager kept telling us that a third party took care of it and she reported it. A district manager from the franchise happened to be in the building the same night as one of our meetings. He promised it would get fixed. A few months later, when it was not, we contacted him again. He actually fired the 3<sup>rd</sup> party and hired someone else. We now have WiFi and he has happy customers, who were about to go elsewhere.



Merely offering free Wi-Fi to customers is not enough. Having it work consistently gets you repeat and happy customers. At a minimum, every shift manager should know how to reset a



router, if they receive complaints. Certainly they should show the customer a concern and see that it get repaired by doing a follow up. It's called training.

I also carry an extension cord and strip in my car, in case there is but one outlet and it needs to be shared, or it is not near an open table.

Internet Forensics, Author - Robert Jones  
Using Digital Evidence to Solve Computer Crime  
Book Review by Robert Kyle, Member,  
PC Community, CA  
September 2012 issue, PCC News  
[www.pcc.org](http://www.pcc.org) / [lcms \(@\) pacbell.net](mailto:lcms@pacbell.net)

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Do you like solving real-life mysteries? Do you have a budding interest in, or have you personally been the target of, Internet scams, malware, spam, phishing attacks, or identity theft and wondered how you might identify and/or expose the culprits? Then this book might be a place to start.

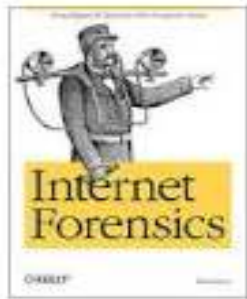
The author of this book, Dr. Robert Jones of Craic Computing, defines Internet forensics as the application of scientific methods toward criminal activities on the Internet as a whole. This book might be considered an introduction on how to find and follow clues while overcoming techniques the bad guys often use to hide their crime and identities. It might also be considered a primer for those interested in computer security because if you know how they do it, you have a better understanding of how to identify and fight it.

A paraphrased outline of the book might be as follows:

1. Overview of the threat and how to begin.
2. How bad guys use e-mail, scripts, attachments, hidden URLs, redirection, forgeries, pirated Web sites, and more.
3. Tools and techniques for tracing back to the source and overcoming obfuscation.
4. Investigating Web sites and their host servers.
5. Slicing and dicing collections of data looking for telltale patterns, signatures and points of commonality. One source of this data for the author was his own filtered spam collecting on his home computer.
6. Extracting hidden information and detecting forgeries in on-line documents and images.
7. Looking for clues about the perpetrators and point-of-origin.
8. Real case studies.
9. How to take action.

I especially enjoyed the author's step-by-step accounts of several actual investigations he and others have successfully conducted. For example the author summarizes why a particular e-mail caught his attention, how he safely explored the related Web site's underlying directory which led him to images stored on the site. Those images proved the hoax and linked this site to a number of other phishing and check-cashing scams. The author also references successful investigations by others. One very interesting reference,

WhoWroteSobig.pdf, is available for free download on the O'Reilly.com Web site. This is a detailed report on how a team tracked and identified the probable author of a major virus.



The forensic process is not simple but it can be very educational. The author guides us through the process with a bag of tips and tricks: which operating system and browser should you use when investigating, how to protect your own anonymity with tor, free investigative software tools, Perl scripts he has developed and other resources he found useful. For example, are you aware of a Web site that allows you to possibly turn back the clock and see what a particular Web site looked like in the past? This can be a very formidable tool against bad guys that like to execute their con and then erase their Web site before they can be investigated and identified.

He also provides wise advice on where caution is advised. For example, you should use great caution when investigating child pornography sites because law enforcement may be monitoring your actions and identify you as a suspect. One well-known musician was temporarily identified on a Sex Offenders Register despite his defense that he was only trying to help fight child abuse.

Although the book can get a bit technical, I found it readable and educational. This book is available in two forms: soft-back and e-book.

If you intend to actually use the book extensively in your own research, you might consider buying the e-book form which would allow you to cut and paste the pearl script examples.

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|---|---|
| <p><b>Product Information</b><br/> <b>Internet Forensics</b><br/>         By Robert Jones<br/>         Book \$39.95 or Ebook \$31.99<br/>         O'Reilly Media, Inc.<br/> <a href="http://www.oreilly.com">http://www.oreilly.com</a><br/>         800-998-9938</p> | <p><b>O'REILLY</b><br/>         User group members<br/> <b>SAVE 40%</b> off print<br/>         and <b>50%</b> off ebooks<br/>         Enter Discount Code: DSUG<br/> <b>oreilly.com</b></p> |
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The Tip Corner - August 2012  
 Bill Sheff, Novice SIG Coordinator,  
 Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA  
 August 2012 issue, The LVCG Journal  
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### Restore Last Tab

Ever accidentally close the last tab and realize you needed it? Just click Ctrl+Shift+T and your last closed tab will open up. This works in Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome and Internet Explorer. Try it out.

**CD or not CD which side is up?**

There are two sides to a CD. A shiny side and a label side. The shiny side of the disc is the side that holds the data and is the side that the CD player reads. Thus it seems that to protect the disk, you would put the CD label down, shiny side up. However, let's review what we know about a CD.

A CD starts with a soft, thick plastic poly-carbonate disk that stores the data; the little pieces of data are called "pits." These pits (millions of them) are "pressed" into the plastic, from the center of the disk outward. CDs are read by a tiny focused light called a laser. On top of the data, a thin reflective spray of aluminum coating is applied. (Some manufacturers use gold or silver instead of aluminum.) This layer acts kind of like a mirror and reflects the laser back (after it has read the data) to the CD player's detector. This is the play side of the disk; it is the shiny side. On top of that layer, an ultra-thin hard layer of plastic coating is applied. It seals and protects the reflective coating underneath and forms the surface that the label can be applied to. Finally, the label is applied.

Now here's the important part: The label itself is very thin - ultra thin - and offers little-to-no protection for your CD. If you scratch your CD on the shiny side, it may become distorted and can skip, or keep playing the same spot over and over, or just freeze until you hit the table or shelf it's playing on to make the CD continue. It could be dirt or a scratch. If it's on the shiny side and it hasn't gone too deep, you can generally go a long way towards fixing it by cleaning it or getting some CD scratch remover.

However, since the reflective layer is so near the surface of the label side, it is a lot easier to damage. And if you damage the label side of a CD, you have yourself another coaster. No way to fix it. This makes it seem as if you should place the CD shiny side down.

However, if you damage the shiny side badly enough, it makes the CD unreadable. It is a bit harder to damage than the other side, but that doesn't really matter, the point is that it can be damaged beyond repair if you put it down on that side. This makes it seem as if you should place the CD shiny side up.

So what's the answer? Neither! You should always put it back in its case. Both sides can be equally as damaging to data on a CD.

**Expanded Windows 7 Defrag Options**

Windows 7's defrag utility has a lot more going for it than previous versions, but you have to know where to look to find the good stuff. To access some of the more interesting options like parallel defragging (defrag two separate hard drives at once) and progress reports, you need to use the command line version.

It's not that hard, just click Start, and in the search box type cmd. In the list that appears above, right-click the cmd icon and select "Run as administrator." The command window should open up.



Type defrag and press Enter. This will bring up a list of switches you can use along with the defrag command. Simply type the command with a / and the letter of the switch you'd like to use. For example, if I want to defrag all volumes I'd type defrag /c. Multiple switches can be used, too, so if you want to defrag all volumes at normal priority I'd type: defrag /c /h

Experiment a bit and see if you can come up with a combination you like! There is also a neat little program called Smart Defrag. It is free and offers a screen with many options that could help you to a better defrag. Google it and download.

Get rid of the blue vertical lines on the left side of forwarded email.

Those blue vertical lines are generated by some e-mail clients. They can create bad formatted text and are not just annoying but can be hard to get rid of. However, there are a few tricks that can speed up your ability to remove these annoyances without resorting to using a third party "e-mail cleaner" program. Here are some methods to remove vertical lines in some of the most common e-mail programs and services.

### **Microsoft Outlook**

Despite possibly having the most options for formatting e-mail of any e-mail program or service available, Outlook has, surprisingly, the simplest method of removing vertical lines from forwarded e-mails. First: Open the e-mail you wish to forward, select the content directly in front/to the right of your vertical line (s) in the body of the e-mail message, and press Ctrl+C to copy the highlighted contents to your clipboard. Then create a new blank e-mail message. Then, Paste (press Ctrl+V) your copied e-mail into the new e-mail message. Your e-mail message will be pasted into the new message window with most, if not all, vertical lines gone. If any vertical lines remain, simply copy any text and images with said vertical lines still attached, and paste the copied content into the same e-mail just above the content you just copied. Repeat until all vertical lines are gone. Finally, delete any duplicate or unnecessary text/images beneath your newly cleaned content, and send your e-mail.

There is another way in Outlook to do this which is even easier. Outlook has keyboard shortcuts to "Clear Formatting": CTRL+SHIFT+Z or CTRL+SPACEBAR. Either of these methods will remove the blue vertical line.

In Windows Live Mail, which is the latest evolution of Outlook Express, there is a push button solution to removing these email annoyances. Simply select your e-mail and press the forward button to open it in the standard "Send E-mail" editor. Then, place your cursor directly in front of (to the right of) the vertical line you wish to remove. At the top of your e-mail editor, select the Message tab if it is not already selected. Various message formatting options will appear. Find and click the Clear formatting button just next to the font size and style fields.

Once all vertical lines have been cleared, you will likely be left with a bit of margin space to the right of your e-mail content. To remove this, simply select the message content you wish to forward, copy it (Ctrl+C), and paste it (Ctrl+V) at the beginning of your message. Delete the old content beneath your freshly formatted message, and hit Send.

## Capitalization

Should you capitalize the word "Internet"? What about "e-mail"? Do you use a hyphen or not? Ever wondered about that? Here is the answer: The Internet is actually considered to be a proper noun and in the English language, most proper nouns are capitalized. So, in short, the word Internet should always begin with a capital letter. If you haven't been using a capital, don't worry, you're not the only one. As far as the term e-mail goes, it is accepted with and without a hyphen. However, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the correct spelling is actually e-mail, with a hyphen. Why?

Because the word e-mail is composed of two different words (electronic and mail), so the hyphen helps separate them for a more technical spelling. Who knew? Now, go on and spread the word.

Extending the Life of Your XP PC  
By Dick Maybach  
September 2012 issue, BUG Bytes,  
Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ  
[www.bcug.com](http://www.bcug.com) / n2nd (at) charter.net



When you first got your PC with Windows XP it was blazingly fast and its hard disk was huge. But now, maybe 10 years later, it has slowed, perhaps drastically so, and its disk is nearly full. The cause of the disk-space shortage is probably obvious, you've stored thousands of photos, songs, and documents, and installed many programs. But what about the speed? Unlike you and I, electronic hardware doesn't slow down as it ages.

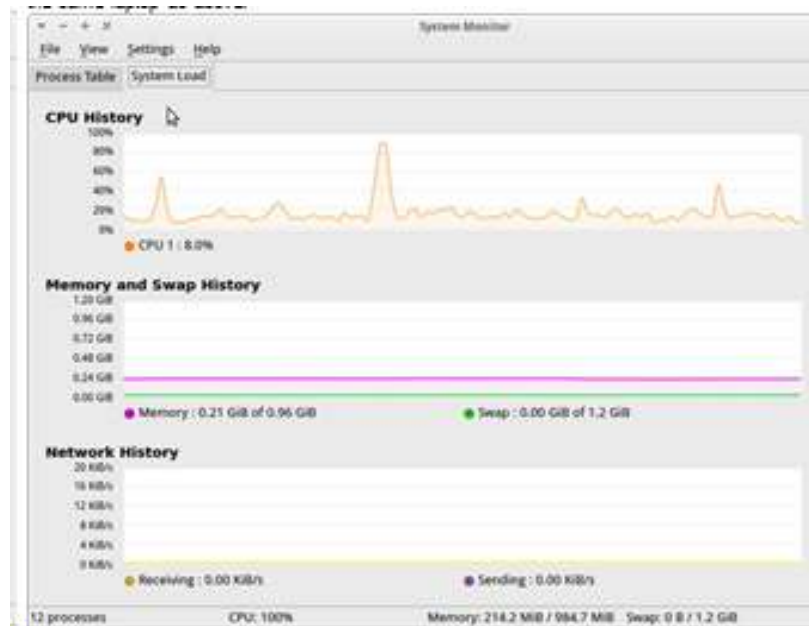
Hopefully, you've kept your software, especially your anti-virus program, up to date and have avoided downloading files from questionable sources. If not (or if someone who uses your PC is less careful), run a full virus and malware check and update Windows and all your applications before you try anything else.

At the time you bought your XP PC, 500 Mbytes of RAM was plenty, but the patches and enhancements you've added over the ensuing years means that the XP you now use is much different than the XP you originally bought. In particular, 500 Mbytes of RAM is now woefully inadequate. To check your RAM use, simultaneously press the Control, Alt, and Delete keys, select the Task Manager button on the Window that pops up, and then select the Performance tab.



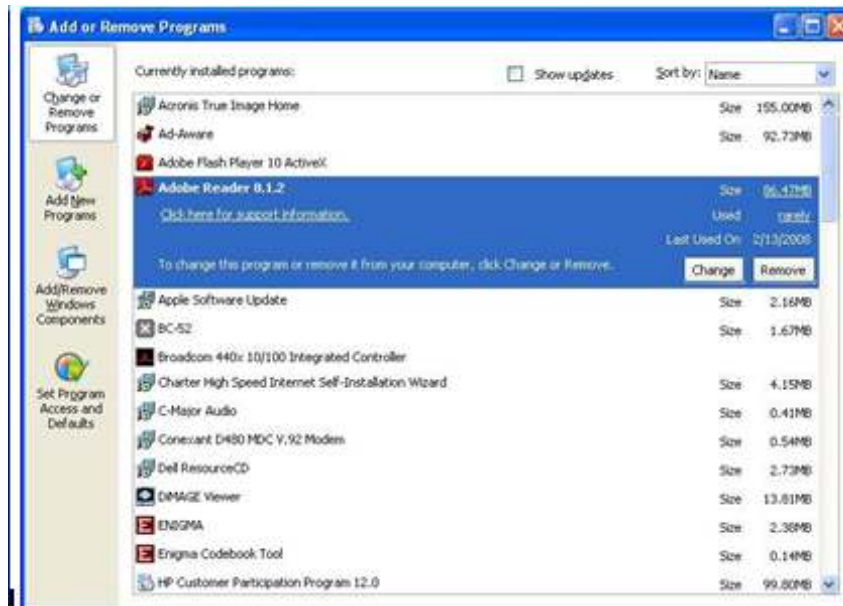
I did this on my laptop and, as the screen-shot shows, found that with no applications running except for my virus checker, it was using about 814 Mbytes of RAM (see the Commit Charge box). Fortunately, this PC has 1 Gbyte of RAM (as shown in the Physical Memory box). Note also that the Commit Charge limit is nearly 2 Gbyte. The second Gbyte is provided by the swap file; when Windows needs more memory than you have physical RAM, it moves some data from RAM to a swap file on your hard disk to make room. If this happens more than occasionally, the situation is called thrashing, which results in Windows slowing to a crawl as it continually moves data from RAM to disk and back again. If your XP PC has only 500 Mbytes of RAM, it will begin thrashing as it boots, and will be frustratingly slow. The only fix for this is to increase RAM to at least 1 Gbyte. Removing programs, defragging, and other such measures will not improve the situation at all, despite what fraudulent TV ads say.

Instead of adding RAM, you could switch to Linux, although for an old PC you will have to use a lightweight distribution, such as Xubuntu. (Mainstream Linux distributions, such as Ubuntu, require modern display controllers.) The only difference between these and the mainstream cousins, such as Ubuntu, is that the displays are simpler; that is, you lose some of the visual bling that the software vendors think you want; both types support all the same applications. The screen-shot below shows Xubuntu's resource on the same laptop as above.



Note that only 210 Mbytes of RAM are in use, compared to XP's 814 Mbytes. Linux thus provides a way to extend the useful life of old PCs by many years. This approach is especially attractive for laptops, whose hardware is difficult to upgrade.

If you want to keep using XP, you have little choice but to increase the amount of its RAM. Beyond this there are other steps you can take, although their effects on performance will be much smaller. Before you do any of the following, back up your entire PC. If you haven't already, use your favorite anti-virus software to get rid of any malware, use Microsoft Update to bring the system up to date, and update the drivers. Then look at the installed programs with the sequence Start ® Control Panel ® Add or Remove Programs. Highlight each in turn to see how much disk space it occupies, how often you use it, and the date you used it last. Ask yourself if you really need it, and if not click the Remove button to remove it. This will free disk space and may speed up your PC if the program has a module that resides in RAM. As the screen-shot shows, I haven't used Adobe Reader for over five years and I could recover 86 Mbytes of disk space by removing it.



You can clean up a drive with the following sequence: Double-click on Computer ® right-click on the desired drive - select Properties - click on the Disk Cleanup button.

The screen-shot shows the result on my laptop.

As you can see, I can recover almost 22 Mbytes of disk space by performing the checked operations. (Although it doesn't appear in this shot, I could recover almost an additional 3.7 Gbytes by compressing old files, which I prefer not to do.)

You may gain some speed by disabling some of the visual display effects. Navigate Start - Control Panel - System - Advanced tab - in the Performance box click on Settings and uncheck everything except

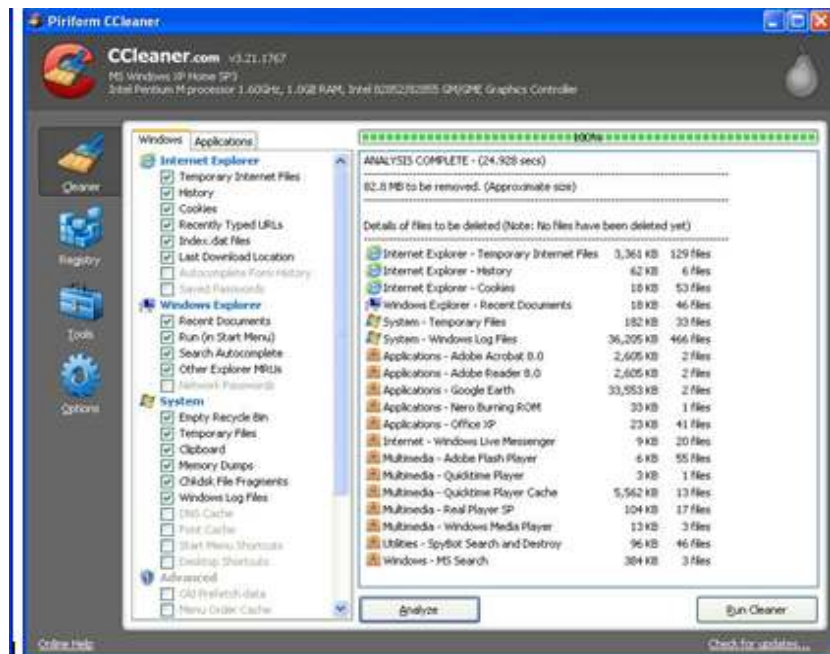
- ! Show shadows under menus,
- ! Show shadows under mouse pointer,
- ! Show translucent selection rectangle,
- ! Smooth edges of screen fonts,
- ! Use drop shadows for icons labels on the desktop, and
- ! Use visual styles on windows and buttons.



The following will recover an impressive amount of disk space, but do it only if you have a recent back-up that you know to be good. Move to the directory C:\Windows and make the hidden items visible by clicking on Tools (in the menu bar), selecting Folder Options, selecting the View tab, and the selecting the Show hidden files and folders item. You will find a large number of directories whose names begin and end with \$ and include "Uninstall" somewhere in between. These allow you to back out of patches, but it is most unlikely you will ever have to do this, especially if your system is running well. (My laptop had 339 such folders, occupying over 250 Mbytes.) You can delete them and recover the space, but be very careful not to delete anything else, in particular, directories whose names begin and end

with \$ but don't include "Uninstall". It would be prudent not to empty the Recycle Bin for a few days, until you're sure you haven't broken anything.

CCleaner (<http://www.piriform.com/CCLEANER>) is a clean-up tool with a good reputation. It takes a more aggressive approach than does the disk cleanup procedure discussed above. There is a free version, but read the installer screens carefully as it will install a Google toolbar unless you uncheck the appropriate box. The first time you run the program, click on the Analyze button to see what it will do; the screen-shot below shows the effect on my laptop. (I had earlier performed the Windows Disk Cleanup described above.)



It claimed to find almost an additional 83 Mbytes of disk space that could be freed, although it removed only about 80 Mbytes. The program also includes tools to clean up the registry, uninstall programs, manage system restore points, and wipe disk drives, and will also show what programs run at startup. For more information see <http://www.howtogeek.com/113382/how-to-use-ccleaner-like-a-pro-9-tips-tricks/>. Finally, a different company has developed an add-on, CCEnhancer (<http://singularlabs.com/software/ccenhancer/>). On my laptop, this add-on allowed CCleaner to find 10.7 Mbytes of additional files. However, CCEnhancer requires .NET 3.5, which uses several hundred Mbytes; if you don't already have this installed, forget about CCEnhancer as what it can recover is only a small fraction of the space .NET will occupy.

I haven't mentioned defragging because I've never found that it improves performance by any detectable amount. I'm not saying it's a bad idea, just that you shouldn't expect any performance change.

Also consider a hardware approach to increasing disk space. In particular, USB hard disks are inexpensive and easily installed on both desktops and laptops, and although they are much slower than internal hard drives, they are entirely satisfactory for storing data that you don't access frequently.



## Computer Humor



"Okay your father managed to get a mouse. Now how do we use it?"



### 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



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