



MUG Monitor

Macon Users Group—Serving Southwestern North Carolina and Northeastern Georgia

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September 2008

Next Meeting:

Second Life

by Marion Skydancer
a local artist and
Macon Community
Facilities Building
September 8th, 7 PM

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Tech Talk: Seven Steps for Safer Surfing

by Lizz Russell

1. Before surfing, check for antivirus updates. On most antivirus programs, you can right-click on the antivirus icon in the lower right-hand corner of your screen and then left-click on *Update* or *Check for Updates* or *Update Now*. Also, only use ONE anti-virus program. Using more than one can reduce your protection.

2. Set up and use a limited account for web browsing. A limited account is also wonderful for keeping visitors from trashing your computer. It allows downloads, but programs cannot be installed in this type of account, including spyware programs, and changes cannot be made to your system.

To set up a limited account:

Left-click *Start*, left-click *Control Panel* (if you don't see *Control Panel*, left-click *Settings*, then *Control Panel*), Double-left Click *User Accounts*, left-click *Create a New Account*, Type a name for the new account (I call mine *Surfer*), left-Click *Next*, left-click the box for *Limited Account*, left-click *Create Account*.

To use the new account, left-click *Start*, left-click *Log Off*, and then left-click *Switch Accounts*.

3. Whenever you see the little yellow shield in the lower right-hand corner of your screen, double-left-click it and *Install updates*. (Note: you cannot

install Windows Updates from a Limited Account.)

4. If you download music, DO NOT USE Kazaa, Limewire, BearShare, or other file-sharing programs unless you want your computer to be trashed. Using legitimate music services such as iTunes, WalMart, Rhapsody, and many others is the way to go.

5. Never give financial information in response to an email.

6. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Be very afraid of anything that involves money orders.

7. Avoid social networking sites. Websites such as Myspace and Facebook are a major target for all kinds of bad things. I could write a whole article about the dangers in these spaces, including identity theft, phishing, spear phishing, fake links to malicious websites, pedophiles, data miners, and more.

Second Life

by Local Artist
Marion Skydancer

September 8th
7 PM

Macon Users Group Franklin, NC

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Monthly Meetings

MUG meets the second Tuesday of every month at 7 P.M. in the Macon County Community Facilities Building on Georgia Road (US 441 South).

MUG Monitor Staff

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Website

www.maconusersgroup.org

Volunteers Available

The following club members have thoughtfully volunteered to be on call for other members having problems or needing a little extra help. If you would like to add your services, please email the newsletter editor at rhonda1114@verizon.net.

Lee Alexander.....	369-2342.....	sawdust21@verizon.net
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John Rymer.....	526-9899.....	jrymer@verizon.net
Jack Wallingford..	743-0194.....	jwally@smnet.net

Linux SIG

with Jim Swanson, Mentor

The next Linux SIG meeting is Tuesday, September 23rd at 7:00 PM in the meeting room at the Macon County Public Library.

Quick Tips

by Lee Alexander

Malware Alert

Beware of a pop-up window that shows the progress of a virus scan that you did not initiate. After the fake scan finishes, unless it appears that your computer is full of viruses and Trojan horses. You're then offered fake antivirus software for a fee.

Laptop Batteries

All rechargeable batteries have a finite lifetime, usually governed by the frequency and number of charging cycles. Another life-shortening effect is elevated temperature. These factors apply especially to laptops. A recommendation is to remove the battery when running on AC power. This will reduce the number of charging cycles, avoid the possibility of overcharging, and reduce the exposure to elevated temperatures. Temporary storage in a refrigerator, however, is *not* recommended; the main culprit would be condensation.

Directory Updates

Change:

Arthur Chika
828-338-2565
828-347-6956 (Cell)

New Member:

Johnathon Snyder
165 Guffey's Gap Rd.
Franklin, NC 28734
421-8623
snydersound@juno.com

Treasurer's Report

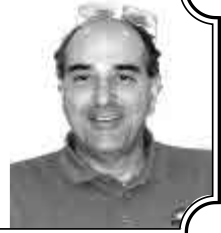
Phyllis Minnich

Balance forward.....	748.71
Income: interest, dues, 5□0/50.....	72.00
Expense.....	(79.00)
Balance*	
(including equipment fund).....	\$741.71
*Equipment Fund (50/50, auction).....	16.00
Investment Fund.....	1572.27

*103rd Edition of
Lou's Views!*

Virtual Politics

by Louis Vitale (aka 44RAILGUY)



It is hard to escape the politics these days, and it will get worse. The real campaigns are about to start and the attack ads will soon drown out even advertisements for your favorite prescription drug. Traditional print and media outlets will be saturated, but the real battle may be in cyberspace.

The saying goes, "money is the mother's milk of politics." If that is so, then the internet is its cash cow. John Dean really started the political fundraising revolution in 2004 with his ill-fated presidential run. The model he created is the basis for the wildly successful campaigns of the current presidential race.

As an example, just one PAC (Political Action Committee), ActBlue, has raised \$56 million dollars for more than 3000 candidates nationwide. And there are probably hundreds of such fundraising PACs for both parties.

The whole nature of political power has shifted this year. Obama has raised well over \$200 million dollars online, mostly with small donations. The Fat Cats with the big checks are no longer in charge. Millions of small contributors have now replaced the few big contributors. Perhaps their corrupting influence will be replaced too.

The best political machine in the world, which ran the best campaign ever, was beaten by an internet startup. Hillary's defeat was a direct result of her failure to understand the power of the internet to raise money. She had the opportunity to enlist the young and eager Silicon

Valley entrepreneurs, but she chose instead to rely on the proven power of the old guard and she lost.

It is said that all politics is local. Feet on the ground are often more important than the money a candidate can raise. Making phone calls, knocking on doors, stuffing envelopes, and putting up signs are all traditional ways of getting out the vote. The problem has always been getting people to volunteer, and then organizing them into an effective force. Problem solved.

Go to any of the major candidates' websites, and there will be dozens of ways for you to participate. Put in your zip code and you are immediately linked up with like-minded activists. It is possible to set up a party to watch a speech, to organize a phone bank, or to set up a neighborhood canvas. The best of these sites use a version of Google Maps. Each pin on the map contains the information on that person or location. Click on the pin and you are sending an email to that person. With the proper software and website you can be up and running in a day, a process that used to take weeks.

A cartoon in today's paper shows John McCain sending a message to his staff using an old telegraph key (.....-.-). High tech for 100 years ago. The truth is his campaign, like the other major campaigns, is able to communicate almost instantly with all their supporters. Email, Twitter, text, blogs, it is all instantly available on your cell phone, blackberry, laptop or your old-fashioned desktop machine.

This ability to instantly communicate allows the campaigns to react almost in real time to a news story, a current event or a gaff by the other side. Sign up and be the first to know the results of the latest poll. For political junkies it does not get any better than this.

The internet is a tool and like any tool it can be used for Good or Evil. I have mentioned a few of the good uses, now for the Evil. We have all seen it, the racist emails, the Swift Boat websites, the phony news stories, all designed to call into question the values or patriotism of the other guy. It is all so easy to do, and there is no accountability. This used to be a cottage industry, but today it is a highly refined art, fueled by passion and hatred of the other guy. He is not like us so he must be bad, and I can hurt him and no one will know my name. Much of it is so well done that most pass it on without really giving it a second thought.

Of course, the antidote for this is to think before you hit the "forward" button. Use "Urban Legends" "Snopes" or even "Fight the Smears" and get a few facts before you pass on another myth.

I have not even mentioned Facebook, Second Life, My Space, Friendster, YouTube and a hundred other social networking sites where the campaign rages on. In all of these virtual worlds the arguments are the same, only the forum is different. But when it comes right down to it, On November 5th our vote will be real, and it will have real consequences in the real world.

Saving Pictures that Show on Your Computer Screen

by Dick Carricato, member of the Tri County Computer User Group, Florida, www.tccug.net

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups

These days we are bombarded with beautiful pictures on our computers, and when I see a great picture, I'm not happy until I have it stored away in my own computer where I can use it when I want to.

The usual technique used to extract and save pictures from the web, email, or any other source that places a picture on the computer screen, is simply to right click on the picture and select "Save picture as..." This will often open the "My Pictures" folder where the user can select a folder in which to save the picture.

This is a very straightforward, simple, and easy to remember technique for those situations where it works, and if it worked all the time this article would end right here. However, it often does not work. Sometimes web authors make it difficult for you to copy their pictures, and a right click on one of those pictures produces a grayed (not available) "Save picture as..." selection. Pictures in PDF documents in general cannot be copied, and for that matter, even highlighted text can't be copied from most PDF documents. Very often when an email picture is right-clicked, the "Save picture as..." selection is available, but when that option is selected an error box appears saying, "The system cannot find the file specified."

The remainder of this article will be devoted to a single method that allows the user to copy and save any image that shows on his computer screen. This method involves the use of the Windows Print Screen

function. Of course, everyone remembers how to use Print Screen (Prt Scn) because we have discussed it in the past. Just in case you have forgotten I'll review it here.

The Prt Scn key is located to the right of the function keys at the top of the keyboard. When Prt Scn is pressed, it copies a picture of the entire display to the Clipboard. Pressing Alt + Prt Scn copies an image of the Active window to the Clipboard. Remember that the active window is the one with the bright title bar, and it got that way by clicking the mouse anywhere within the window. The Clipboard is just a section of memory that Windows uses for all Copy and Paste operations. Information is copied from any Windows program to the Clipboard by using the Copy command. Information is pasted to any Windows program from the Clipboard by using the Paste command.

The next time a nice picture shows up on your screen, right-click on it and attempt to save it by using the "Save as..." command. If that fails, click once in the window where the picture is located; maximize the window to make the picture as large as possible, and then press Prt Scn. (In rare cases you might have to hold the Shift key while pressing Prt Scn.) This places the entire window, including the picture that you want, in the Clipboard. The rest of the procedure requires a graphics processor, and fortunately the Windows Paint program will do just fine. It can be found by clicking Start, (all) Programs, Accessories, Paint (or mspaint). To put a shortcut to Paint on your desktop, right click

and drag it to your desktop, let go, and select *copy here*.

So far all we have done is to discover a picture, maximize the window that contains it, and press Prt Scn. Next, open Paint by double clicking the Paint icon on the desktop. In Paint, click Edit and select Paste. Now the entire window that you copied above is visible in the Paint window

Pick up the selection tool from the group of tools along the left side of the Paint window. To do this, click on the dotted line rectangle. Move the mouse pointer to the upper left corner of the Picture. Then press the left mouse button and drag to the bottom right corner of the picture. This selects the picture that you want to keep. Copy this to the Clipboard by right clicking within the selection and (left) clicking on Copy.

Now you have what you want in the Clipboard, and all that you don't want is visible in Paint. Click File and New, and answer the query to save the garbage with "no." Click Edit and Paste to get the picture alone into Paint. Click File and Save as.... Be sure to select a file type of JPEG for your picture. If you don't, Paint will save the file as a bitmap (.BMP) which is quite large, ranging from 1 to 5 megabytes depending on the size of the picture. The JPEG file will be only about 5% of the size of the bitmap file.

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Protect Yourself against Identity Theft

by Marjie Tucker, Editor, Mountain Computer User Group, www.mcug.org

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We've had several programs and articles that mentioned Identity Theft, but I thought it might help us all to have one document with a checklist of symptoms and solutions for this horrific problem. Make certain that you're not a victim.

What is Identity Theft?

Identity theft is an act of impersonation. Someone gains the ability to use your personally identifying information to commit fraud or some other crime. The item stolen may be as simple as your name, address, phone number, or date of birth. Or, it can be an actual number or document such as your social security number, mother's maiden name, bank account information, credit card number, driver's license number, signature or passwords. The thieves may rent an apartment, open a new credit card, or open a cell phone account in your name. You may not even know about the theft until you review your credit report or are contacted by a debt collector. Some victims spend hundreds of dollars and many, many hours repairing damage to their good names and credit records. People have been denied mortgages and car loans, lost out on job opportunities, and even been arrested for crimes they didn't commit because of identity theft.

How Do Thieves Steal an Identity?

Basically identity thieves are looking for an opportunity to steal your social security number, credit card number, or other financial account information. They may use a variety of methods to get your information including the following:

1. Dumpster Diving—They actually go through trash bins and dumpsters looking for discarded credit card bills, bank statements, and items containing

your social security number. Your best defense is to shred any trash that contains sensitive information.

2. Skimming—Store clerks and restaurant workers can use a special device that records your credit card number while it is being processed. Always peruse your credit card bills carefully to look for unauthorized charges. If any are found, notify your credit card company immediately.

3. Phishing—These attacks are sent to you as email messages, supposedly from your bank, the IRS, PayPal, or another company that might have your information on file. They usually send you to a web page that looks legitimate, but actually sends your username and password to a server owned by the thieves. Never respond to a website that has been emailed to you. If you think the email is legitimate, go directly to the company's website before you login.

4. Changing your Address—Identity thieves can obtain your credit card and bank information by completing a change of address form at the post office. This way they are personally delivered your bank and credit card statements. If you stop receiving your mail, go to the post office and make an inquiry.

How Can You Protect Yourself?

- 1.** Always carefully review your credit card and bank statements for discrepancies. Immediate report any suspicious activity.
- 2.** Order reports from the credit reporting bureaus at least once a year. Review them carefully for any entries that are not legitimate.
- 3.** Shred credit card statements, bank statements, credit card offers, and any other papers that contain your personal information.

(see *ID Theft* on page 10)



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The Deals Guy

by Bob Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group



We worked the Cisco show (www.cisco-live.com) and they had over 700 computers set up. Classrooms were everywhere and, in spite of tight security, it was said that 26 laptops disappeared one night. Security certainly got tighter after that. There were attendees from many countries.

Last month I mentioned the website "Second Life" and its great popularity. I'm told that other companies have countered with similar products. Here is a quote from Mike Ungerman who helped Hewie Poplock with the presentation: "Following the review of virtual 'universes' like Second Life, I came across several other alternatives that offer much the same capabilities. Google has started Lively (www.lively.com/popular), a 3-D, avatar-based, chatting world. It's still pretty rough, but is billed to eventually offer much the same capability as Second Life.

"For those with gaming consoles, either the X-Box 360 or PS3, 3-D avatar based interaction is being offered in the next several months. X-Box Live is Microsoft's system (tinyurl.com/5awgix) and Playstation Home is Sony's offering (tinyurl.com/6xckoc)

How's Your Registry?

WiseCleaner has released Wise Registry Cleaner v. 3.6.2 and Wise Disk Cleaner V. 3.5.1, a pair of affordable Windows applications that stabilize your computer and make it run more quickly. Wise Registry Cleaner speeds up your computer by cleaning the Windows Registry. The Registry is at the heart of every Windows computer. Each time users install new software,

information is added to the Registry. Few uninstall programs remove this information properly or completely. Therefore, over time, as you install and uninstall software, the Registry accumulates junk lines and pointers, and the computer's performance suffers.

Wise Registry Cleaner identifies and safely removes the useless information that has accumulated. The program also optimizes the PC. If the user accidentally makes a mistake during a tune-up, they can undo all changes with a single click. The latest version of Wise Registry Cleaner includes a useful feature: "System Optimization Tool." Using this tool, users can easily tune up their PC in minutes without being a PC expert! [DealsGuy note: *Optimize Your PC* appears to only be in the Pro version.]

Wise Disk Cleaner is an intuitive, fast, and easy-to-use application that frees up disk space by deleting files no longer used by any software. In addition to the temporary files, log files, and backup files that accumulate over time, the program can identify more than 50 additional types of unnecessary files that users can safely remove. Instead of sending deleted files to the recycle bin, the program can compress these files and save them to a special directory, allowing users to restore files in the future if they find that they really need them. The latest version of Wise Disk Cleaner contains additional advanced customization options that let users fine-tune cleanup operations. [DealsGuy Note: *Move To Location* and *Advanced Options* appear to only be in the Pro version.]

Both applications are designed to be used in tandem, allowing users to streamline their Windows Registry and optimize their hard drives.

Whether you are a business user who values a stable and brisk computer, a parent who needs to clean up after the software that their children install and uninstall on the family computer, or a computer consultant who needs applications that will keep their customers' PCs running optimally, Wise Registry Cleaner and Wise Disk Cleaner have the tools that you need.

The programs include support for more than twenty languages. Please note that there are *free* versions of both programs. You can choose to pay for the Pro version, or only use the free version if preferred. Wise Registry Cleaner V. 3.6.2 and Wise Disk Cleaner V. 3.5.1 run under Windows 98/Me/NT/2000/XP/XP-x64/2003/Vista/Vista-x64/2008 Server, and cost \$19.95 each. As a bundle, users can buy both programs for \$32.95. Everybody can visit www.wisecleaner.com to purchase the software securely online, or to download free trial versions. Users can also download free versions of each program without the advanced options and system optimization tool.

If You Don't Understand, Try This LingvoSoft (www.lingvosoft.com) announced the release of an all-new language learning system for Pocket PC that makes speaking any language simple, fast and enjoyable. Putting everything you need in the palm of your hand, LingvoSoft Language Teacher 2008 makes communicating in a new language easier than ever before. Providing every beginner with

(see *Deals Guy* on page 10)

Moving on to Vista, Part 9

by Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, WA. www.fapcug.org

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups

As I mentioned last month, Vista's Service Pack 1 is out. I didn't see any real changes in my computer after I installed it; most of modifications are supposed to deal with computer security. I have since encountered a problem with my printer.

I don't print too often from my "Vista computer," so the problem wasn't immediately obvious. When I did try to print some documents, they "disappeared" without printing. My first thought was that I had changed the firewall on my print server and locked out connections from other computers on my home network (I've done that before). No, that wasn't it.

After checking and finding that I could transfer files between my computers, I went to the printer section of my control panel. That's where I discovered that Vista wanted a new printer driver installed. I don't remember any problems with the printer when I started using this computer. As I recall, Vista recognized my printer (a fairly new HP ink jet printer) and it just worked.

Anyway, a search of Hewlett Packard's website didn't reveal a new printer driver. In fact, it told me to use the one built into Vista. I turned to the installation CD that came with the printer and reinstalled the printer driver from the CD. It worked and I can print over my home network using a wireless connection again. I have no idea why this happened, but at least one other TAPCUG member also discovered a printer driver problem after installing Vista SP1.

Speaking of security (see paragraph 1), Windows Vista, like Windows XP, comes with a firewall program pre-installed. As all you computer gurus know, a computer firewall is a hardware or software tool that examines all Internet traffic, letting only "safe" traffic into your computer. The firewall for Vista was supposed to scan Internet traffic both entering and leaving your computer. I can hear some of you saying, "If I scan incoming traffic to be safe, why do I care about outbound traffic?" Well, incoming traffic is the bigger threat to you. Using pre-defined rules, it determines which programs are allowed to use your network connection or which ports can be used for communications. If some spyware, Trojans or malicious "phone home" software slip past your firewall, they may allow someone to take remote control of your computer to attack it

other computers through your Internet connection (that's why Microsoft is always sending you those security updates). So a firewall that scans outbound traffic attempts to stop this. To make a longer story short, contrary to plans, the ability to check outbound traffic has not been provided with Vista's firewall.

Another shortcoming of Vista's firewall is that it does not create a log of all attempts to contact your computer from a local network or the Internet. This kind of record can be useful if you suspect a hacker has been visiting your computer in the middle of the night. Actually, there is a way that you can modify Vista's firewall to create a log and examine outbound traffic. The process to set this up is probably more complicated than most of us would like to deal with, so I offer a much easier

(see *Moving On* on page 11)

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Cloud Computing: The Future of Personal Computing?

By **Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., Member and Contributing Columnist,**
Sarasota PCUG, Florida. www.spcug.org

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups

You may not have heard of it, but “Cloud Computing” is the latest buzzword in computing circles. The question is, just what does it mean? The problem is that at this point, there is no really solid definition for this term. You can search for it and you’ll find a number of interpretations. So, from all that I have encountered, I’ll try to synthesize one for you.

Cloud computing is being able to access files, data, programs and services all via the Internet. You would have little or nothing stored on your computer, in fact, your computer might simply be a device, desktop or handheld, that can access the web and all of its services. In addition, cloud computing offers the services of enormous computer networks that function as if they were components of a supercomputer. These networks can process tens of trillions of operations per second compared to three billion operations per second for the most powerful desktop computer. This kind of computing power can be used for analysis of risk in financial portfolios, delivering personalized medical information, and powering immersive computer games. These networks use hundreds or thousands of network servers using PC related technology.

I think this excerpt aptly describes the computer cloud. *“What is Google’s cloud? It’s a network made of hundreds of thousands, or by some estimates 1 million, cheap servers, each not much more powerful than the PCs we have in our homes. It stores staggering amounts of data, including numerous copies of the World Wide Web. This makes search faster, helping ferret out answers to billions of queries in a fraction of a second. Unlike many traditional supercomputers, Google’s*

system never ages. When its individual pieces die, usually after about three years, engineers pluck them out and replace them with new, faster boxes. This means the cloud regenerates as it grows, almost like a living thing.” (Quotation is taken from a Business Week article by Stephen Baker dated 12-13-2007.)

Although some of these services may appear to be only of interest for corporations and their IT departments, services are also being made available for home and small business users. As you might expect, the availability of this Internet computer access depends on fast broadband access—an area where the U.S. lags behind many other countries. In this country, we think that having 10–15 megabits/sec on our broadband is really fast. However, in Japan, 50 megabits/sec is closer to the norm, even for home users.

So who would be providing these cloud computing services? Actually, they already exist in the form of Google Apps, Amazon Elastic Compute (EC2), Sapotek’s Desktop2 (www.desktoptwo.com), Zim Desk (www.zimdesk.com) and Zoho Office (www.zoho.com). (There are also a number of companies providing these services, and more, to large corporations only.) Sapotek claims to have 175,000 users of their Desktop2, and their servers can handle 8,000–10,000 of them at the same time. They have a partnership with Sun that will provide the equipment to handle as many as 350,000 users. Every time I look for more information on Cloud Computing, I find new companies listed that are offering these services. It is a very rapidly growing industry.

So, if you wanted to take advantage of the services in the cloud, what

could you expect to find? Let’s take a look at Desktop2. This is a free service that provides normal office applications: writer, spreadsheets, presentations, notepad, and a calendar. It also provides hard drive storage, email, instant messaging, blogs, MP3 player, RSS service and a website editor. The free version does come with ads, as you would expect.

Zimdesk is very similar to Desktop2. Its web applications includes pop3 email, file manager, sidebar, RSS, browser, word processor, spreadsheet, calendar, task manager, accessories/widgets, web messenger, video conference, media player, Internet radio, web TV, games, zimcommunity, zimblob, and much more. It is also a free service that incorporates advertising. Like everyone else, they have to support themselves somehow.

The third of these services is Zoho Office. On their home page you not only find a list of the services they provide, they are all available for trial simply by clicking on an icon. As with the previous services, the list of applications is quite extensive.

Google Apps is very similar in its offerings to the preceding services. However, it is more oriented towards business users. It does have a free version which might be useful for the individual user.

Zoho uses Java to run its applications on the web. Other services may use Flash or Java. Either of these allow the applications to run in your browser and to operate at reasonable speeds. I have tried out the word processing and found it to be no different than using a word processor

(see *Cloud* on page 11)

Using Vista's Hidden Disk Cleanup Options

by Vinny La Bash, Member of the Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc.,
Sarasota, Florida, www.spcug.org

Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

There are many things to like about the disk cleanup utility in Windows Vista. It's built into the operating system, it works, and it's free. It's also a tool that removes many potential problems such as corrupt files that may be causing difficulties or could cause computer ills in the future. One of its minor shortcomings is that it doesn't detect and eliminate wasteful duplicate files. This is a very insignificant quibble as Microsoft never claimed it could do that in the first place. That ability is an item on my wish list for the next version. Overall it's a very useful tool that everyone should be familiar with.

There is more to Disk Cleanup than removing junk files and recovering gigabytes of disk space. It's amazing how "temporary" files can hang around for months in the little used crannies of a disk drive. Poorly written install and uninstall routines are largely responsible, but software glitches and power hiccups leave their own share of digital detritus laying about.

Systems with more than a terabyte of storage are becoming common, and it's easy to lose track of even the largest files. Try locating a suitcase-sized patch of land in an area with the dimensions of a football field and you'll have an idea of what I'm talking about. Aside from taking up space, these useless files can slow down searches, bloat your backups, and make Vista's slow defrag process even slower.

If you're not familiar with how Disk Cleanup works, you can access a good tutorial by clicking the Start icon, and then Help and Support. In the search box type *Disk Cleanup*, and you will get a list of items

directly and indirectly related to the subject. You want the first three or four items in the list.

Let's access the normal version of Disk Cleanup by opening up the Computer icon on the Desktop, right-clicking the C: drive, and choosing Properties.

On the *General* tab, locate the *Disk Cleanup* button just below and to the right of the disk graphic. You might want to make a note of how much used and unused disk space you have for a before-and-after comparison. Left-click on the *Disk Cleanup* button and you will get a message that Windows is doing some calculations. Eventually, you get a dialog box which displays various categories of files you can remove. Windows will let you peek at many of these files, but it's largely a waste of time. I've never found anything worth examining. Make a note of how many types of files Windows can remove, and then close all the dialog boxes.

You've just seen the standard way to access Disk Cleanup. Let's now examine Disk Cleanup with its deep cleaning options exposed. Vista's official file name for the Disk Cleanup utility is **cleanmgr**. Open the Start globe again and type *cleanmgr* in the Start Search box at the bottom of the menu. Press Enter and the *Drive Selection* dialog box appears. This is a great way to eliminate mouse clicks if we want a fast way of getting to a specific drive. However, this method doesn't display the extra functions we're looking for, so close the dialog box down.

To access the enhanced options, we need to use something called the

System Agent, or **sage**, in conjunction with **cleanmgr**. Click the Start globe again and in the Start Search box type *cleanmgr /sageset:1*

Notice the space between **cleanmgr** and the forward slash. **Sageset** is a variation of the System Agent utility, and the number 1 allows you to select different cleaning options. You can use any number you want, even zero or negative numbers.

Disk Cleanup will now be running in a special setup mode that offers more cleaning options than the standard default. In addition, the System Agent will remember whatever cleanup options you select. When you run Cleanup again, you don't have to make the same selections—as long as you use the same number. That's what the System Agent set part does.

Press Enter to run the utility, and wait for the *Disk Cleanup Settings* dialog box to appear. Highlight the individual cleanup options, and in some cases there is additional information that is missing from the default dialog box. You also have more cleanup options.

You can select any number of options, from just one to all of them. For maximum cleaning, select everything. When you're satisfied with the options you've selected, click the OK button and run the utility. When the job is done, go back and see how much disk space you've recovered. You could be in for a pleasant surprise.

We used the *sageset* command to set the cleanup options. The system

(see *Cleanup* on page 11)

(ID Theft—continued from page 5)

4. Never throw away credit card receipts in a public place. Watch out for credit card receipts that may print out (particularly at gas stations) and be left for someone else to pick up.
5. Do not respond to credit card or mortgage offers from unknown sources.
6. Do not respond to emails asking you to go to a website address that is embedded into the email. Do not give your personal information over the phone unless you initiated the phone call.
7. Do not carry your social security card with you.
8. Do not post your personal information on a website.
9. Change your passwords frequently and use a secure password.

What Should You Do If Your Identity is Stolen?

First file an Identity Theft police report. This will give you specific legal rights, and automatic notification to the three major credit reporting agencies. These legal rights permanently block fraudulent information from being added to your credit report and prevent companies from collecting debts that resulted from identity theft.

You should also file a report to the FTC ID Theft Division. You can find an online form at tinyurl.com/5uwnem. To ensure that the problem has been solved, you should monitor your financial records for at least three months after you discover the crime, and order credit reports on a quarterly basis for at least one year. The best way to fight ID Theft is to remain alert. Monitor your personal information and alert your family members of the importance of security.

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(Deals Guy—continued from page 6)

the tools necessary to start speaking another language immediately, your success is virtually guaranteed.

With intuitive and efficiently arranged sections that teach the alphabet, words, phrases, and dialogs, you will soon have the skills you need to start speaking accurately and comprehensibly. With the advanced voice output and speech recognition built-into the Language Teacher, you will always get the pronunciation right the first time, something new learners absolutely depend on. Loads of practice tests and evaluations provide the help new students need to start mastering any language immediately. The price is \$149.95, but a 25% discount is available on any LingvoSoft software title. Simply enter your personal gift certificate code "MY8UZPF7M4" in the 'Add Gift' field of the shopping cart and click the "Add Gift" button (tinyurl.com/5omcbk).

This Should Help You Copy

[DealsGuy Note: Be sure to thoroughly read the FAQs on their website so you more fully understand the capability of the product.]

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What's That Key?

Everybody knows Windows has a product key used to install it. If you needed it for some reason, do you remember where you put it? It also ends up embedded in your registry, so maybe you could edit your registry if necessary to retrieve it, but that's living dangerously. The Magical Jelly Bean Keyfinder V2.0.1 is a freeware utility that will go in and get it for you. It has options to copy the key to your clipboard, save it to a text file or print it for your records. It works on a wide family of Windows operating systems.

It also has support for multiple installations of Office, and the ability to change the Windows XP, 98 and ME installation key. It's at tinyurl.com/5bhprj. Also offered is a neat popup dictionary that is freeware. I read about these long ago in Tim Hoke's freeware column in PC Alamo, the newsletter for Alamo PC Organization (www.alamopc.org).

That's it for this month. I'll have more new product announcements on my website (most not offering a discount). www.dealsguy.com. Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, bobclick@bellsouth.net. Editor's note: This column has been edited for space and content considerations.

(Moving On—continued from page 7)

solution. Turn off Vista's firewall and install a third party firewall program. Do not try to use two or more firewall programs at the same time. They do not play well together. There are a number of firewall programs that you can purchase as well as some that are free. I've been using the free version of Zone Alarm for many years and I'm satisfied with its protection. It also creates a log that I can use to examine attempts to connect to my computer. You can find it on the Internet at www.zonealarm.com.

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(Cleanup—continued from page 9)

keeps track of what you've done, and it will run the utility according to your specification in the future, but you can't use the `sageset` command for that. You need to ignore `sageset` and run the `sagerun` command instead. From the desktop click the Start globe, and in the Search box type: `cleanmgr /sagerun:1`

Press Enter and the system will automatically run in enhanced mode with the preferences previously recorded. Run this command anytime you wish from now on. You can always change preferences by rerunning the `sageset` command with the `cleanmgr` utility.

Chances are good that a lot of clutter will be removed from your system, and you will see an increase in free space on your system. If you wish to automate the process, you can use the Task Scheduler to run the tool automatically at your convenience.

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(Cloud—continued from page 8)

on my computer. This is true even though the speed of my Internet connection is usually only 500–750 kilobits/sec. When you are using a wireless card modem it is only on very rare occasions that you can match fast DSL speeds. I'm sure that those of you on cable or fast DSL would have no problem using a web-based application, at least with regard to the speed of the applications response. However, if you are preparing a graphic-loaded presentation, then you might experience some slowdown depending on the speed of your connection.

The idea of relying on web-based applications and storing data in the "cloud" of the Internet has long been pushed as a way to do business on the road. Now software companies are making entire web-based operating systems. They present themselves as a complete computer in the cloud and are aimed at a wider audience. These browser-based services could help those who can't afford their own computer.

There are also those who are convinced that this is the future of computing. However, some security concerns should be considered. Unless you know how secure your data is when you use a cloud system, you should be cautious about what you share with the online servers. You need to know how your data is protected from other users of the "cloud." As a service provider, they should be willing to undergo external audits and/or security certifications. Also, you need to know what kind of data protection and data recovery procedures are provided. As has been demonstrated many times, computers do fail. Finally, you need to know what happens to your data in case the company fails or is sold to another entity. This is also not uncommon in the high-tech industry. As is always the case, before allowing sensitive information to be used or stored on the web, remember "caveat emptor."

Lastly, consider what computing might be like should the "cloud" become the method of choice. Certainly there would be no need for computers to have all the bells and whistles we now associate with them. Just think about the possible design of a system destined for use solely with cloud computing. It would only need a minimal operating system that would allow the computer to boot, then start the web browser which would connect to the Internet. Your cloud page would be your home page and display your chosen desktop. As for a hard drive, a 10–20 gigabyte solid state drive would probably be adequate. USB ports for printers, scanners, possibly other I/O ports would be included. The one thing you would want to be high end would be the graphics system. This would allow display of high resolution graphics used in online games and for viewing videos. It is possible that the graphics processing unit (GPU) would be more powerful than the CPU (central processing unit) or it might even incorporate the CPU. This could all be contained in a 1–2 pound laptop or compressed further into a handheld computer or cell phone. Although some of these characteristics are found now in smart phones, the spread of cloud computing would enhance the features of these phones. For most of us, the available screen size on these smart phones is not large enough, leaving a market opening for inexpensive laptops such as the ASUS Eee PC or the OLPC (one laptop per child). In neither case would we need an operating system as massive as Microsoft Windows.

One thing is certain, anytime you try to predict the future, you usually miss the mark by a mile. So it will be interesting to see what reality brings about over the next few years.

Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over 35 years, developing software and assembling systems. This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author at [bwsail\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:bwsail(at)yahoo.com).

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