



# MUG Monitor

Macon Users Group—Serving Southwestern North Carolina and Northeastern Georgia

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## Next Meeting:

### Windows 7

by Lizz Russell

Macon Community  
Facilities Building  
September 8th, 7 PM

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## Tech Talk: Windows 7

by Lizz Russell

Ready or not, here it comes. After the nightmare named Vista, Microsoft is now rushing to market with its many versions of Windows 7.

- Windows 7 Starter
- Windows 7 Home Basic
- Windows 7 Home Premium
- Windows 7 Professional
- Windows 7 Enterprise
- Windows 7 Ultimate

3 Windows Vista machines, and I hate to use them. I had these machines in my mind as I plunged into W7 world.

At the next MUG meeting, I will be demonstrating some of the features of Windows 7. In addition, I will give you the information you need to find out if your current computer will meet the requirements of upgrading, if you decide you want to upgrade.

I do not know as of this moment if all the versions will be available in both 32-bit and 64-bit or not, but many of the versions are available in full package and upgrade packages.

Of course, different versions have different requirements.

My basic gripes about Windows Vista are that it is incredibly slow, that things just quit working here and there, and that they made it way too complicated to achieve basic tasks. I personally own

**Windows 7**  
by Lizz Russell  
7 PM, September 8th

The topics that will be covered include new features, performance, compatibility with what you have now, compatibility with things that you connect to your

computer, costs, what surprises the license for Windows 7 has (you need to know), and the things that have changed.

Hope to see you at the meeting!

*Lizz Russell runs a local computer services and repair business. Call her at (828) 342-0782 to arrange a house call to your home or business.*

## If Your Computer Gets Wet...What?

by Bob Schwartz, a member of HAL-PC, Texas, [www.hal-pc.org](http://www.hal-pc.org)

What to do if something wet spills on your electronic device or it falls into wet whatever?

The following is not guaranteed, but represents years of experience.

Quick, unplug it! Unless there is a likely shock hazard. Look up the instructions (best to do this when you

buy it). Find out if there is any prohibition against using alcohol. Alcohol can dissolve some materials.

There are generally two items to have handy. One is *distilled* water to first wash off and dilute any spill, especially anything that might be conductive. The second is alcohol, 90+% isopropyl

(see *Wet* on page 2)

## Macon Users Group Franklin, NC

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for contact information

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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).

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(Wet—continued from page 1)

(rubbing) alcohol. Ethyl alcohol or ethanol—90%—will work too. Alcohol has an affinity for water. Rinsing the item first with the distilled water and then with alcohol will dilute, pick up water, carry it away, and evaporate quickly. The higher percent alcohol 90% vs. 50% has a greater affinity for water.

Time is important. You do not want water to soak into an otherwise insulating medium, especially water that contains something conductive like salt. It will leave a conductive residue that will short out portions of the device. That is why you want to *rinse first* with distilled water to carry away any conductive residue and then the alcohol to remove the water film. *Most tap water has dissolved minerals* that remain after the water evaporates, hence the distilled water to rinse these away.

After, and I repeat *after*, the above cleaning, you can use *very modest heat to help dry out* the item. You can use a hair dryer at some distance. Make sure you don't heat the item any hotter than is comfortable to hold. Some plastic materials deform at relatively low temperatures.

Remember the order: (1) rinse with distilled water (2) rinse with alcohol (3) *warm gently* with hair dryer or warming oven.

For items immersed in flood waters, the above approach can be tried, but the outlook is not promising. Generally the conductive flood waters have had time to soak into the various insulating materials and are almost impossible to remove. Still, it may be worth a try, especially if you have the time and possible success is worth the effort. Distilled water and alcohol are not very expensive. Most circuit boards are coated with varnish to resist moisture. In this case, wash repeatedly with distilled water. Use a soft brush to remove any remaining film such as mud. Then, the alcohol followed by the dryer. Using the dryer prematurely can "set" the offending material to the point that it may be almost unremovable. So save it for the very last step after you are sure things are clean. Your efforts may save part, if not all, of the equipment.

Bob Schwartz is a HAL-PC member, retired EE, 14 patents, technical writer, active in civic affairs: President, Brays Bayou Association; Vice President, Marilyn Estates Civic Association; Correspondence Secretary with the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy. This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author at bobx (at) hal-pc.org.

## Linux SIG

with Jim Swanson, Mentor

The Linux SIG will not meet, until further notice.

*Lou's Views!*

## Netbook Price: \$1,500

**by Louis Vitale (aka 44RAILGUY)**

Cheap netbooks are the rage for the moment. Their small size and price have attracted a lot of attention. In fact, it is one of the few bright spots in computer sales during these tough economic times. Any very small laptop computer below the \$500 price point is usually called a netbook.

Here is how PCMag.com defines a netbook: "They generally have 8- to 10-inch widescreens and lack built-in optical drives. None have full-size keyboards—they usually range from 89 percent to 93 percent of full size—so expect a more cramped typing experience than with a mainstream laptop. You will find an abundance of USB ports, a webcam, a card reader, and built-in Wi-Fi. Some even have bonus features like ExpressCard slots, Bluetooth, and options for cellular modems. Most every netbook has adopted the Intel Atom platform, made up of the Atom processor, integrated graphics, and 512MB to 1GB of RAM."

You really have 3 basic choices to make if you are considering buying one: The battery, the OS and the hard drive. The basic battery is a 3-cell, which will give you 2–3 hours of useful mobile power. The upgraded 6-cell will be good for 6–8 hours of unplugged time.

Most netbooks run on a Windows platform, usually Vista Home, but Linux has a significant portion of the market. A Linux system is usually cheaper and very user friendly. Since the basic use of a netbook is for email and web surfing, the operating system is not a big issue. Of course with Windows

7 coming out in a few months, this may change.

The hard drive is the really interesting feature. Here, again, is what PCMag.com has to say. "You'll find two types of hard drives: solid-state drives (SSDs) and spinning hard drives. While SSDs have faster transfer speeds, are more durable, and have longer life spans than their traditional counterparts, you pay a premium for these advantages. Most netbooks are available with spinning hard drives that can store up to 160GB worth of data. Shoot for a hard drive that has a capacity of at least 60GB and a rotational speed of 5,400 rpm."

The creation of the Intel Atom processor and SSD hard drives made the netbook possible. The combination significantly reduces energy consumption and reduces size. This trend is just beginning. In fact, we are getting very close to the holy grail of gadgets, the one device that does it all.

I have written about the Smart Phone before; in fact my latest cell phone is just one step from a full-fledged computing device. The iPhone is truly a shirt-pocket computer, and with over 50,000 applications available to use on its tiny screen, it has become very successful. What is lacks is a screen and a keyboard designed for human beings, not hobbits.

Most netbooks are equipped with WiFi, and will connect to your home's wireless network, making them very portable. But what if WiFi is not available—wouldn't it be great if you could connect it to

your cell phone network, and really see all those websites and YouTube videos without squinting? Well, now you can. AT&T is heavily advertising a netbook for only \$200, but—and here is the catch—with a 2-year contract for access to their 3G network. At \$60 a month for 2 years, that is well over \$1,500.

So there you have it, a netbook costing over \$1,500. It remains to be seen whether or not this will catch on; iPhone subscribers pay more than that now. That price, I assume, is in addition to your cell phone's basic plan.

But remember, you still need a cell phone to make this work. Maybe if they incorporate a cell phone into the netbook, you could put the keyboard to your ear and speak into the screen.

### Quick Tip

**by Lee Alexander**

#### *Vehicle Owner's Manual*

Did you buy a used car and not get a Vehicle Owner's Manual? Have you lost it or keep it in the glove compartment and would like to refer to it when you are not in the vehicle? How about having it on file as a PDF (Portable Document Format) which you could search for specific terms at will?

Here is a tip from the AARP—a URL from which you may be able to download the book for your vehicle: [www.edmunds.com/ownership/howto/articles/120189/article.html](http://www.edmunds.com/ownership/howto/articles/120189/article.html). The list is somewhat limited as to age and models, but well worth a try.

# Open Office.Org 3.0 An Evolutionary Improvement

by Bill Wayson, LINUX SIG Leader, Channel Islands PCUG, CA, [www.cipcug.org](http://www.cipcug.org)

OpenOffice.org (OO.o) is Free and Open Source Software's (FOSS) premier alternative to the Microsoft Office productivity suite. It offers a high level of compatibility with many of the ever-changing MS Office formats, provides many of the same features as MS Office, and works similarly to MS Office. This month, we will explore the recently released OpenOffice.org 3.0, which is available for Microsoft Windows, Linux, Apple Macintosh, Sun Solaris, and several other operating systems. Many, if not most, users of MS Office who require the broad, deep range of features of MS Office could change to OO.o and become productive after a very shallow learning curve.

If your requirements are more for just compatibility with Microsoft's Word document formats in a word processor, you can consider more streamlined FOSS alternatives, such as AbiWord.

OO.o is a full-featured office productivity suite comprised of six integrated applications: the Writer word processor (which also has a web page editing mode), Calc spreadsheet, Draw graphics program, Impress presentations program, Base database program, and Math equation editor.

OO.o 3.0 is an evolutionary improvement on the application suite, with new features, enhancements, and user interface improvements. Users of Apple Macintosh OS X systems benefit greatly from OO.o 3.0, which will now run as a native OS X application. OS X users also have support for Microsoft's VBA macro language and the Calc Solver component, which allows solving optimization problems where the optimum value of a particular spreadsheet cell

has to be calculated based on constraints provided in other cells. Both of these features are missing in MS Office 2008 for Mac OS X.

All users of OO.o 3.0 benefit from its improvements, including the two above. Another area of significant improvement is one where OO.o is breaking out of Microsoft mimicry mode: support for open document standards. OO.o 3.0 supports the latest OpenDocument Format (PDF) specification. In fact, ODF is the OO.o default document format. ODF is gaining wider acceptance worldwide, being adopted by more companies and governments as the standard for documents, and becoming supported by an increasing number of applications. OO.o also reads and writes many other formats, including those of various versions of MS Office and Word, plain text, and several PDA document formats.

Additionally, it reads the newest formats introduced in MS Office 2007. Exchanging documents with users of Microsoft's products should not be an issue. The Writer screen now sports a handy zoom slider control, making it quick and easy to change the zoom level of the view. Additionally, it automatically displays multiple pages of the document as the zoom level is lowered. Writer now displays notes—notations added to a document that are not necessarily meant to be printed—at the edge of the editing window to the side of the document, making it easier to read them and see their context in the document. In addition, notes from different users are displayed in different colors, together with the editing date and time, facilitating collaborative work on a document.

Calc sees some useful improvements. One is in the charts feature. Now, *(see OO.o on page 11)*

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# Broadsides

**Compiled by Ron Broadhurst, a member of the Space Coast PC Users Group, Inc., FL,  
The Space Coast PC Journal, June 2009, [www.scpcug.com](http://www.scpcug.com)**

These ideas are compiled from years of accumulations from various magazines, books, online sites and my own personal experience. I claim neither originality nor ownership to any of its contents. My only intent is to share the various “tips,” “tricks,” & “hints” in hopes of helping and maybe enhancing your computing experiences. They are all intended for anyone who uses a PC. It is for beginners as well as advanced users. Enjoy and use as you will.

## ***Turn Off Indexing to Speed Up XP***

Windows XP keeps a record of all files on the hard disk so when you do a search on the hard drive it is faster. There is a downside to this and because the computer has to index all files, it will slow down normal file commands like open, close, etc. If you do not do a whole lot of searches on your hard drive, then you may want to turn this feature off:

- Open My Computer.
- Right-click your hard drive icon and select Properties.
- At the bottom of the window you’ll see “Allow indexing service to index this disk for faster searches,” uncheck this and click ok.
- A new window will pop up. Select Apply to all folders and subfolders.

It will take a minute or two for the changes to take effect, but then you should enjoy slightly faster performance.

## ***Correcting System Hang at Startup***

If your system hangs about 2 or 3 minutes at startup, where you can’t

access the Start button or the Taskbar, it may be due to one specific service (Background Intelligent Transfer) running in the background. Microsoft put out a patch for this but it didn’t work for me. Here’s what you do:

- Click on Start/Run, type “msconfig,” and then click OK.
- Go to the Services tab; find the Background Intelligent Transfer service. Disable it, apply the changes & reboot.

## ***Change the Start Menu Style to Classic***

Does the new Windows XP Start menu take up too much space on your desktop? You can easily change the look back to the Windows Classic Start menu by following these steps:

- Right-click the Start button, and then click Properties.
- Click Classic Start menu.
- Click the Customize button to select items to display on the Start menu.

By default, selecting the Classic Start menu also adds the My Documents, My Computer, My Network Places, and Internet Explorer icons to your desktop.

## ***Display Your Quick Launch Toolbar***

- Right-click an empty area on the taskbar, click Toolbars, and then click Quick Launch.
- Easy as that your Quick Launch bar appears.
- To add items to your Quick Launch toolbar, click the icon for the program you want to add,

and drag it to the Quick Launch portion of the taskbar.

## ***Keep Your Favorite Programs Near the Top of the Start Menu***

Do you have a favorite program that you frequently use? Elevate its priority on the Start menu by putting it at the top of the list. This ensures that the program will remain on the Start menu and cannot be bumped by other programs, even if you use the others more frequently.

Right-click the link to your favorite program on the Start menu and select Pin to Start Menu. Your program will be moved permanently to the top part of the list, just below your browser and email programs.

## ***Change Out Your Pointer Scheme***

Tired of seeing your pointer as an arrow or an hourglass all the time? Windows XP offers a number of alternative pointer schemes, such as Dinosaur, Ocean and Sports:

- Open the Control Panel, double-click Mouse, and select the Pointers tab. (If you start in Category view, select Appearance and Themes, then click Mouse Pointers under “See Also”).
- Next to Schemes, click the down arrow and select a scheme to preview its pointers.
- Click OK to apply the scheme to your desktop.

## ***Create a Personal Screen Saver***

For a great way to put your digital photos to work, try creating a slide show presentation for use as a screen saver.

(see ***Broadsides*** on page 11)

## Word Processing Choices from A–Z (really) Part 2: From N to Z

**Notepad:** The built-in Windows plain-text editor makes a minimalist HTML editor with clean unformatted code. Not all users know there are font and word-wrap options available. To check those capabilities, go to Start>Accessories>Notepad>Format.

**OpenOffice Writer:** This article is being written with version 2.4. It retains a few minor quirks and inconveniences compared with MS-Word 2000, XP, or 2003, plus some decided advantages. For example, if the squiggly red line under correctly spelled terms (missing from its dictionaries) bothers you, unclick the ABC button on the top of the screen—the one with a wavy red line. At any point, click its mate (ABC above a blue check mark) and manually check spelling. However, there is not button for the thesaurus. Call it up instead with Ctrl-F7. You can also check in Czech or Nepali as well as more common tongues. The default language list supplies three flavors of English and three of German but none of French or Spanish. More 79 other language dictionaries are downloadable or under development. I switch between OpenOffice (“Writer” or “switer.exe”) and Word, depending on the task. OOW saves keystrokes by remembering recently typed words and inserting them in white letters amid blue bands after one types just a few of the word’s letters. To accept its suggestion after starting a word, tap *Enter* and keep typing. To ignore it instead, just type on. Users of Excel will recognize and appreciate this option. OpenOffice outdoes Word in WYSIWYG cropping of inserted pictures. For a long time, OO has

offered in the File menu “Export as PDF” as one choice at file-saving time. A menu button also offers the same feature. It rapidly creates and saves the file directly instead of sending it to a printer menu as Adobe’s expensive version requires.

Logically enough, page formatting choices are found in the (Ta-Da!!!) Format drop-down menu instead of the File menu. I especially like the “E-mail as Microsoft Word” button on my customized toolbar. I’ll use that one in a few minutes to send this file to Ira.

Although a paid-for version with telephone help is available as StarOffice (from Sun Microsystems) for under \$70, this free version is supported by a worldwide community of volunteer programmers and forum dwellers. The suite includes equivalent programs for Excel and PowerPoint, a capable database, and

a drawing program—all accessible from the File>New menu in OpenOffice Writer. (In place of Microsoft Publisher in the premium-priced MS-Office suite, the free open-source Scribus may be satisfactory: [www.scribus.net](http://www.scribus.net).) The native OOW file format, .odt, is widely employed around the world, conforming to the standard used in Europe and other ISO countries. This file type crosses platforms to work in Windows, Linux, and Mac OS X. OOW also opens and saves in .doc, .txt, .rtf, .xml, .html, plus several more formats including Microsoft’s .psw (for Pocket Word). I have had better success with OOW opening and editing older Word documents than with MS-Office 2007. Free download to install: [www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org).

**Thinkfree Online:** To me, it’s “ThinkLoser.” and forget the “free”

(see A–Z on page 7)



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(A–Z —continued from page 6)

part. This is/was supposedly a free online suite with an optional Premium version. Reputable media mentioned its limited beta offering was as early as December 2006 with cost estimates of \$5 to \$10 a month. Earlier this week (April 15) a web search at Avant listed Broderbund as #1 among many download sources, but that link seized up both times I tried it. Reaching Broderbund by a different route, I found the installable (not “online?") Windows-only version for \$44.95. After 20 minutes or more trying to download, register, and fire up the free one elsewhere on the web, after email verifications, etc., plus two more crashes—amid various notices about what to do if downloading and installing failed in a variety of ways—I admitted failure and uninstalled it. Just before giving up, I had semi-installed and managed to find a Thinkfree screen claiming this to be the best office suite on Earth. If so, Earth is in trouble besides just growing warmer. Other screens apparently accessed their word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software, but never revealed any way to actually create a file using any of those choices! Two teasers seemed promising at first—”Search” and collaboration. Since I had not yet created a document, it was no surprise that searching for one proved to be a dead end. With nothing yet in production by me or anyone I know, its collaboration had even less utility. Next, I searched in “Templates,” achieving my only Thinkfree success, sort of. I typed “letter” in the template search box and got five letter templates or something. The first didn’t seem to be a letter template at all, but was a document about how to use Haitian expressions. The other four were in Asian languages using characters I cannot read. To be fair to Thinkfree, I’ve copied and pasted below their exact message and boldfacing. Since I never reached the “Sync Cache”

folder they describe, I wish you better luck than mine if you care to try it. No date for the new version or demise of the older one was mentioned. If you have purchased TF Premium, store the receipt with your Enron stock certificates. Microsoft needn’t worry about this competitor. “We will be launching ‘My Office’ and providing a new version of ThinkFree Office. You will no longer be able to use the old version which is called ‘ThinkFree Premium’ as of that time. You will be using our new integrated ThinkFree Online service after installation. Please remove ‘Sync Cache’ folder before you proceed installing the new version of ThinkFree Office. Location and Instructions for removing the sync folder.

For Windows: C:\Documents and Settings\account\MyDocuments\TFSync

For Mac: /Users/account/Documents/TFSync

For Linux: /home/account/TFSync

**Wordpad:** This little brother of MS-Word comes free with your Windows installation. It opens and saves in Unicode, .rtf, and the older MS-DOS .txt format but not Word’s .doc. It comes with bolding, italics, and underlining of installed Windows fonts in colors, a horizontal ruler with adjustable margins and tabs, and a single bullet style but no numbering button or mail merge. It is a good emergency word processor if the missing features aren’t needed for the project at hand. Start>Accessories>Wordpad.

**WordPerfect X3:** One can pay the full “retail” price of several hundred dollars, but at [www.royaldiscount.com/corel.html](http://www.royaldiscount.com/corel.html) it is \$82.94. I prefer the “OEM” version for \$18.46 with free shipping for either version. The current X3 suite contains a powerful, customizable word processor compatible with MSOffice. Its Quattro Pro spread-

sheet matches Excel quite nicely. A graphics drawing application and Presentations either its native mode or PowerPoint mode. The word processor offers to work in MS-Word style, native WP X3 style, or older versions back to 5.1. All these apps play nicely with MS formats.

**Zoho:** I admit to saving the best for the last. Zoho wins my prize as winner among online word processors. All the integrated application elements of Zoho’s suite employ similar enough interfaces and working styles so that users of Office version through 2003 will either recognize or master them quickly. I wish Microsoft Office 2007 had been designed by Zoho. This suite connects many well presented applications in a style that handles like a nimble sports car instead of a ponderous “featuremobile.” It displays obvious buttons and tools, export/publish options (including PDF), offline options (after one installs Google Gears), a stunning array of accessible and complementary features: spreadsheet, blogger, chat, notebook, planner, mail, database creator and reporter, conferencing, wiki editor, project manager, CRM and contact manager, plus others. Even if “Help” seems a bit elusive, the buttons and menus provide intuitive answers better than traditional, encyclopedia-type help. I found no reference to mail merge, but the other word processing feature set is both complete and readily at hand. Spell check, tables, bulleted lists, tags as folders, comments, and collaboration features seems to be exceptionally friendly. I have just started using this impressive suite, so an in-depth evaluation will have to wait.

About John White: John has taught word processing and spreadsheets for a dozen years at New Horizons (Manhattan), Dowling College, NY Tech, and BOCES. This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author’s permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author at editor (at) iconpcug.org.

# Social Networking—What is it, Really?

by Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida. [www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org)

Social networking is all over the news; Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are the ones that get the most play. So what are they, really? Well, they're websites that provide another way of keeping in touch with friends, family and associates. What are some older social networking methods? Maybe the telegram, the telephone, visiting on Sunday, writing letters. These are all ways of keeping in touch with your family and/or circle of friends. Yesterday we had these less technical ways of keeping in touch. Today we have the computer to help us keep in touch via email, instant messaging, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone, and social networking. Social networking has encouraged new ways to communicate and share information. Social networking websites are being used regularly by millions of people, and it now seems that social networking will become a regular part of everyday computer life.

Social networking is probably the newest technology, and revolves around an internet website that provides social networking services. How about this for a definition of a social network: A site that allows individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, to create a list of other users with whom they have a connection, and to view their list of connections and those made by others within the system. With that in mind, a social network focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities. Most social network services are web-based, and provide

a variety of ways for users to interact, such as email and instant messaging.

On many of the large social networking sites, participants are not necessarily "networking" or looking to meet new people; instead, they are primarily communicating with people who are already a part of their extended social network, such as on Facebook and Twitter.

While it could be said that email and regular websites have most of the essential elements of social networks, the social networking sites make it easy to use. Here's a look at some of the more popular sites.

## ***LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com)***

LinkedIn is mostly for business people and professionals. People use it to maintain contacts and to develop new business opportunities. To use LinkedIn, you create a profile where you describe yourself, listing work and education history, skills, specialties, etc., just like a resume. Once you have your profile, you start connecting to others. That's the driving force behind LinkedIn. You use your connections to promote yourself and build relationships.

## ***Twitter (www.twitter.com)***

Twitter is a micro-blogging service. When it started out, people used it to tell others what they were doing at various times during the day. Now it has evolved into a way to tell people about your activities and then provide a link to further details. SPCUG as a group could have its own Twitter account. Once we had it, interested members could "follow" it and receive our group

information known as "tweets" delivered to them. A Twitter "tweet" has a limit of 140 characters. This may possibly be a substitute for our use of Constant Contact to contact the membership for changes in educational class schedules.

## ***Facebook (www.facebook.com)***

Facebook is sort of a cross between LinkedIn and Twitter. Facebook used to be mainly for students, but has become more mainstream. Like LinkedIn, you build a profile of yourself, where you talk about what your interests and hobbies are. Like Twitter, you can do micro-blogging about things you want people to know. In Facebook, you have friends as opposed to connections or followers.

Users of social networks, in general, can upload a picture of themselves, create their "profile," and can often be "friends" with other users. In most social networks, both users must confirm that they are friends before they are linked. For example, if Alice lists Bob as a friend, then Bob would have to approve Alice's friend request before they are listed as friends. Some social networking sites have a "favorites" feature that does not need approval from the other user. Social networks usually have privacy controls that allow the user to choose who can view their profile or contact them, etc.

Privacy of social networks is a big concern. On large social networks, there have been growing concerns about users giving out too much personal information and the threat of sexual predators. Users of these networks need to be aware of data theft and viruses. However, large

(see ***Social*** on page 9)

# Foxit Reader

## A Worthy Alternative to Adobe Reader

by Sharon Walbran, Editor, TCPC Digital Viking.

Twin Cities PC User Group, Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN, [www.tpc.com](http://www.tpc.com)

When one of my clients was concerned about hacker threats to Adobe Reader last winter, I went in search of alternative software. I found the free version of Foxit Reader at [www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/reader/](http://www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/reader/).

It's well worth a look! Here are just some of the advantages:

**Small Size.** The file is about one-sixth the size of the latest free version of Adobe Reader and takes seconds to download and install. The small footprint is great for older computers or those short on hard drive space. There is also a U3 version for flash drives.

*(Social—continued from page 8)*

networks often work with law enforcement to try to prevent such incidents.

Access to one's information is also of great concern. Many social networks, such as Facebook, provide the user the choice of who can view their profile. This prevents unauthorized users from accessing their information. To edit information on a social network account, the site usually requires you to login or provide an access code. This prevents unauthorized users from editing an account, such as posting pictures or changing personal information.

Social networking is a promising new technology for staying in touch. Give it a try—there must be some group of people you would like to keep in touch with.

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**Speed.** It starts up fast and runs fast. No delays while splash screens load. Printing is also speedy.

**No surprises.** Foxit Reader will remind you of Adobe Reader—same interface, menus and toolbars, so the transition is painless.

**Open multiple files in tabbed format.** If you like the ability to open several web pages on tabs in Mozilla Firefox, you'll like the tabbed format of Foxit Reader as well. View several PDF files at a time, and switch between them easily by clicking the tabs.

**Mark up and leave comments on PDF documents.** You can insert text boxes with comments right in line with text in the PDF document or draw arrows and graphics or highlight text. This is very helpful, especially when you are collaborating on a document with others.

Take it for a test run. You will not be disappointed.

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## Quick Tips

### Get Home Quickly

Whether you're searching a web page, halfway through a long Word document, or checking out the latest numbers in an Excel sheet, in order to get to the very beginning of the information you're looking at, you can press CTRL-HOME. This will instantly return you to the start of any page without you scrolling your mouse or pressing an arrow key until you get to where you need to be.

### Faster Than Wireless

When you purchase a wireless router, be sure it has extra Ethernet ports that support Gigabit Ethernet, which is the fastest Ethernet standard available. Wired Gigabit Ethernet speeds are even greater than the fastest wireless standard, 802.11 Draft N. Having multiple Ethernet ports will allow you to make a wired connection to devices in addition to wireless connections. If you want to connect a wired

network device (one that doesn't include built-in wireless capabilities) to your home network, an Ethernet port and an Ethernet cable will ensure you can still integrate it into your network.

### Avoid Evil Twins

Free municipal and college Wi-Fi hotspots are popping up everywhere, and data thieves are taking advantage of them to lift your information. Hackers establish open networks with official-sounding names, such as SeattleFreeWiFi, and then monitor those networks and access users' information at will. Beware a public network unless you can confirm its SSID (Service Set Identifier; its public name) or you are at a reputable business with Wi-Fi access and only that network is within range.

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# FastStone Image Viewer 3.9

by Charlotte Brown, President of the  
Canton/Alliance/Massillon Users Group, Ohio, [www.camug.com](http://www.camug.com)

If you want a really simple but powerful basic photo program, look no farther than FastStone Image Viewer 3.9. This is the program that I encourage my students to use in the beginning of their picture enhancing journey. When you want to do more things than Image Viewer offers, you can add another program. Many of the programs that help you through the next steps are also free. Working through the basics into more advanced techniques is not as overwhelming as jumping into the middle of a professional program and wondering how to do simple things such as cropping, adjusting light, changing to sepia or grayscale, or even converting to other file formats.

FastStone Image Viewer has powerful capabilities of batch converting images from one format to another, for example from jpg to png. It also allows for batch renaming & resizing, batch watermarking and dpi adjustments and more. To keep things simple, let me walk you through the process of taking only 1 picture at a time through a series of adjustments to make the final print.

I always use 3 windows when working with FastStone Image Viewer. This is the default setting. The upper left window allows you to browse through Windows Explorer to the folder containing your photos. Double clicking the folder opens thumbnails of the files in a large window on the right. When you click on a picture to select it, you see a large thumbnail in the lower left-hand window. Look over my shoulder as I browse to Pictures and double click the folder inside that I have named Christmas 08. Large

thumbnails of all the picture files in that folder now appear in the large window. I will select a file titled Jayden. Now Jayden's picture appears not only in the window on the right, but also as a large thumbnail in the lower left hand corner.

The first thing I do is click File > Save As. I rename the file as JaydenP and use the drop-down menu by File Type to select png. Then I click Save. The new file appears in the large window with all the other thumbnails. It is much bigger than the original jpg. It is now in a *lossless* format, allowing me to make all kinds of changes without losing any of the information originally captured by the camera. I could choose to work with tiff to accomplish the same capabilities. Png files allow me to cut out transparent areas if I wish and the file size is smaller.

Let me insert something that will interest those of you who are doing more advanced work. The rest of you can skip to the next paragraph! When I double-click the picture, it fills my entire window. Moving the mouse to the right side of the screen brings up information about the picture. One of the tab choices is Histogram. That provides me with information about the lighting. Here is a little tip. If you double click the original jpg or you decide to save as tiff instead of png, the tab titled EXIF will give you all the camera information captured when you snapped the picture: date and time, make and model of camera, ISO setting (much the same as film speed in the olden days), the aperture setting, shutter speed, focal length, and whether or not the flash fired.

Now let me return to the really simple process of working with JaydenP, my png file. I click on Edit on the menu bar, and then click on Resize / Resample. Now I can choose to size my picture by number of pixels, percentage or print size. In this case I want to make a color print, so I will click on the radio button titled Print size. Next I will select 300 dpi by using the drop down menu or hand entering the numbers. Remember that digital cameras were developed for digital viewing. Most digital camera settings take pictures at 72 dpi. When you resize to 300 dpi, you have a much clearer picture that has a slimming effect on your subject that is much more flattering!

In this case my picture is portrait, not landscape, so I will choose 5×7. I put a check mark in the selection box titled Preserve Aspect Ratio so I don't create distortion effects similar to those created by convex or concave mirrors! I notice that the photo will not be exactly 5×7. One thing to remember is that digital pictures are not the same scale as film pictures. In this example, my picture turns out to be 5.25×7. I click OK. Now I am back to the 3-pane original window and my picture is still selected (blue frame around it). Now I click on the cropping tool. I check the Paper Ratio to make sure it says 7×5 and has a check mark by Flip Ratio so that I get a 5×7. A dotted line around the picture shows that the program is suggesting an even crop from both sides. After looking at the picture carefully, I decide I want the entire crop to come from the left side. When I move the mouse onto the picture, it becomes a

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*(OO.o—continued from page 4)*

custom error bars can be included, and regression equations and correlation coefficients can be displayed right in the chart. Another is a new feature, spreadsheet collaboration through workbook sharing. This feature allows multiple users to work collaboratively on a spreadsheet while avoiding editing conflicts. The users share a spreadsheet, each adding their data. The spreadsheet owner can then easily integrate the new data with a few clicks. And Calc now supports 1,024 columns per worksheet.

Draw now lets you crop images the same way that most other graphics programs do, by dragging handles located at the edges and corners of an image. This same improvement appears in Impress, too. Additionally, Impress now natively supports inserting tables into presentations. Tables can be added directly into the presentation, and edited within Impress as native Impress objects.

*(FastStone—continued from page 10)*

4-sided arrow. I click and drag the dotted outline to the right as far as I can and click Crop followed by Close. The picture is still selected in the main work area.

Now I click on the Red Eye control on the toolbars below the menu bars. The picture pops open in a new screen. I like to use a zoom of 200%. Then I click in the middle of the eye and draw a circle that covers the entire eye. I can click in the middle of the circle I have drawn, hold down the mouse, and move the circle to fine-tune its location. Then I click Remove Red Eye. Whoosh! It is gone. The program takes me back to the main work area with the three windows.

I click once more on Edit. This time I choose Enhance Colors. The picture opens in a full screen with controls at the bottom for adjusting brightness, contrast, gamma, red, green and blue levels, hue and satu-

Improvements affecting the entire suite include a new set of icons, expanded feature support when exporting to XML, and a new gateway to the suite called the Start Center, which makes it more intuitive to get to where you want to go in the suite.

There is nothing revolutionary in OO.o 3.0. What is new are several improvements and enhancements that will keep the suite in contention with its competitors. And we have not touched at all on the features OO.o already had before 3.0. If you need a productivity suite with both a broad and deep set of features, and particularly if you are not married to Microsoft Office, you should give OO.o a look. It costs you nothing to try, you may just like it, so it just may save you hundreds of dollars.

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ration. You can create some wild looks here. I brighten the picture slightly and make a small color shift to enhance the reds. I click on "Hold Down to See Original Image" to make sure I like the adjustments I have made. When I am satisfied, I click OK. Once again I click on File > Save As. This time I rename the file Jayden5x7 and select the type as jpg. All my changes hold. The picture is still 300 dpi. The size will be perfect with no surprise cropping by the photo lab.

The program allows for so much more: adding text, straightening a picture before cropping, creating slide shows, and things I haven't yet explored. I downloaded the newest version this week. There is now an 83-page manual you can download to learn from clear directions and screen shots how to take advantage of this marvelous program. The manual was written by Bill Westenhoff, who has written tutorials on

*(Broadsides—continued from page 5)*

- Right-click an empty spot on your desktop, and then click Properties.
- Click the Screen Saver tab.
- In the Screen saver list, click My Pictures Slideshow.
- Click Settings to make any adjustments, such as how often the pictures should change, what size they should be, and whether you'll use transition effects between pictures, and then click OK.

Now your screen saver is a random display of the pictures taken from your My Pictures folder.

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other free photo products, as well as Photoshop Elements 3–7.

I suppose you now are wondering about the price. First of all, you need to know where to get the program. Go to [www.faststone.org](http://www.faststone.org). There is no charge to download this program. You will be encouraged to give a donation keep the developers encouraged to work on future enhancements. If you decide you like the program as well as I do, you will want to help them. There is no set fee, so whatever you choose to give is up to you.

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## Directory Updates

### *New Members:*

Kathy Ratcliff  
183 Heathwood Lane  
Franklin, NC 28734  
349-3380, [katratl@verizon.net](mailto:katratl@verizon.net)

# Macon Users Group

Affix  
First Class  
Postage

FIRST CLASS • DATED MATERIAL



## August's Door Prize Winners



George Duley  
won  
the August 50-50  
jackpot!