



Newsletter

Connecticut PC User's Group

January 2012
Vol. 30 No. 4

Next CTPC Meeting

Tuesday, January 24, 6:30 p.m.

Turbo Tax

We feel that this is a good time to have this information made available to help our members with planning for the coming tax season. Our speaker will be Ann Bello, one of our CTPC members. As Ann has been using Turbo Tax for many years, she will give an overview of Turbo Tax 2011 to prepare your tax return. Discussion will include choosing the best Turbo Tax for the user, but she will not provide tax advice.

This is a very timely subject by an experienced teacher and Turbo Tax user and should be very useful to our group. Ann spent 35 years teaching Nursing at the

Norwalk Community College. She retired and is now volunteering as an instructor on a number of programs at Norwalk Senior Center Computer training classes.

Our meeting begins at 6:30 PM and will last until 8:30 PM. Meetings are held at the Silver Star Diner, 210 Connecticut Ave. in Norwalk. We encourage you to remain after the meeting for some socializing and to have Pizza, Salad and the refreshment of your choice. Costs are normally less than \$14/person. They are allowing us to use the facility at "no charge" and we think they deserve some credit for their generosity. ♠

Jan 24th Tuesday 6:30 p.m.
CTPC Meeting
Silver Star Diner, Norwalk, CT

Feb 28th Tuesday 6:30 p.m.
CTPC Meeting
Silver Star Diner, Norwalk, CT

GENERAL MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the 4th (not last) Tuesday of each month except December. There is no charge to attend general meetings. See back page for directions.

www.ctpc.org

Vinny LaBash, Contributing Columnist, Sarasota PCUG, FL, June 2011 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor, www.spcug.org, [labash\(at\)spcug.org](mailto:labash(at)spcug.org)

The Killer App of the 21st Century

Over the years, and more than once, my wife has said "Until computers work the way they do on Star Trek, they are not ready for prime time". She has a point. While computers, smart phones, laptops, tablets, and other close relatives of PCs have certainly become ubiquitous in our society, they are among the most complex devices ever developed by human beings. Their internal complexity rivals that of the most advanced F-22 fighter planes. No one expects grandma to climb into the cockpit of one of these things and be an expert after a few lessons because no one expects an F-22 fighter to be easy to use.

Despite what you have been hearing for years, computers are not easy to use, and they are anything but intuitive. If Isaac Newton were suddenly transported from the 17th century to the present and handed a smart phone, he would have no idea

what to do with it. The ability to make a computer do something useful has nothing to do with intelligence and everything to do with familiarity. Twelve year olds have no problems with smart phones or other devices controlled by microchips because these objects have always been a part of their young lives. Most adults have not enjoyed a similar advantage, and many feel that technology often works against them.

The problem is that people have had to adjust to the needs of technology rather than the other way around. That is the basis of my wife's complaint about computers. She thinks they should adjust to her, and I believe she is right. In the 1982 movie "Firefox", Clint Eastwood played a character sent on a covert mission to the Soviet Union to steal an advanced aircraft that could be controlled by the pilot's thoughts through a neural link. This was and still is science fiction, but it's also a good example of digital technology adjusting to the needs of analog beings like us.

The "Killer App" of the 21st century will be a tool that makes computers and other complex devices adapt to us. It already exists, but it's still in its infancy or perhaps even its embryonic stage. Wherever it is on the evolutionary scale, it has not yet moved much beyond the

multi-cellular level. We're talking about present day speech recognition, a considerable distance from Star Trek where machines understand natural language and react to it as another person would.

Windows 7 has speech recognition built-in. You don't have to pay extra for it. Using it can be quite entertaining as well as educational. Set it up on your computer with a three step process accessed within Windows Control Panel. You will need either a stand-alone microphone or one attached to a headset. The headset-microphone combination is the better option. It's comfortable, and the headset filters out extraneous noise better than most standalone mikes.

It's tempting to get started quickly, but to get the best results you need to setup your microphone properly. Access the **Configure Your Speech Recognition** dialog box, and select **Set up Microphone**. Tell Windows what kind of microphone you're using and the **Setup Wizard** will tell you how to position your equipment and set your audio level.

Now comes the hard part. Bring up the **Configure Your Speech Recognition** dialog box again and select **Train Your Computer to Understand You**. The Wizard will now guide you through some phrases which give Windows the information it needs to understand how to interpret and execute your com-

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Is There a Tablet PC in Your Future?

Apple's iPad tablets are flying off the shelves and many competitors are introducing similar tablets. Here's a brief synopsis of the tablet situation and what it means to you.

In just nine months in 2010, Apple sold more than 15 million iPads. In the first month of sales, the iPad 2 sold millions more. According to some industry experts the iPad is the fastest growing new product in history. Perhaps, though, the most important thing about the iPad is that it has ushered in a new era in computing. Steve Jobs calls it the Post PC age. Although I agree that this is a new era in computing, there is nothing Post PC about it. The iPods, iPhones, and iPads that Mr. Jobs is talking about, all run on computer processor chips. They all perform functions that are similar to those performed by computers. No, this is not the Post PC era. Rather, it is the era of ubiquitous computing. If you look up the word "ubiquitous," you will find that it means omnipresent, pervasive, permeating, universal, and ever-present. This is what mobile devices like the iPhone and especially the iPad bring to us.

I expect that tablet PCs like the iPad will continue to grow in popularity. Although as of this moment, no other manufacturer has yet been able to equal the design, implementation, and price point that Apple has set, the march of the tablets has only just begun. There is plenty of competition in the making. Apple boasted 9.5 billion in revenue from the iPad in the last nine months of 2010, so everyone else is hurrying to get their version of the tablet PC to market.

Motorola recently released the Xoom, an Android tablet that is a competitive but pricey alternative to the iPad. Research in Motion, the creators of the BlackBerry, released their tablet called the Playbook in April. This will, of course, be based on their own BlackBerry operating system. Asus, Dell and LG Electronics will be introducing new tablets based on the Android operating system in the next few months. Samsung has announced that they will revamp their Android Galaxy Tab tablet and introduce two updated versions soon. HP is scheduled to roll out its first tablet based on the webOS operating system sometime in June. So within the next few months, we will have at least eight tablets from major manufacturers running

four different operating systems.

If you are wondering why you should care about this, here's the scoop. Tablets are an entirely new category of computers. In most cases, they will not replace personal computers, but will augment them. There will still be computers running infrastructure, businesses, and hospitals, but both professionals and home users will find tablets extremely useful for their day-to-day living.

Since tablets have touch screens. You don't need a keyboard, mouse, or stylus. This makes them extremely portable. Also most tablets have very long battery lives, so you aren't tethered to the wall by a cable. Because tablets use apps rather than traditional software programs, they are much easier to use and more stress-free than computers.

App stores like Apple's iTunes store and Android's Marketplace have hundreds of thousands of apps available, so a tablet PC can be quickly and easily personalized to perform only the functions that the user needs or wants. This gives users a more intimate relationship with their devices.

In fact, this relationship is not only revolutionary, it is often somewhat magical. I recently watched my three-year-old granddaughter play with a Disney fairy app on an iPad. She gently moved the iPad to and fro to make Tinkerbell and her friends fly over the breathtaking scenery sprinkling fairy dust over the land. She was thoroughly enchanted. I also watched a 70-year-old man who was equally mesmerized by the interactive audio and video of a magazine site that he was viewing on his iPad. These devices are engaging for everyone. People from three to 103 can use and enjoy them.

Tablets are so empowering that I predict that they will become indispensable to everyday living. Who wants to walk into another room to get over to the computer when they need a recipe or want to look up a word. It is much easier to just grab a tablet PC off the coffee table. You can use it to watch television when you are on the go, to check the weather in the morning, or to read a book or listen to music as you endure the wait in the doctor's office.

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Constance Brown, President, Canton/Alliance/Massillon Computer User Group, Ohio, July 2011 issue, The Memory Map, www.camug.com, [constanceb \(at\) camug.com](mailto:constanceb@camug.com)

Tips & Tricks

Every once in a while, it is good to review some basic principles and concepts of using a computer. One question my students often ask is, "How do we know whether to single click or double click." Well, there is not a hard and fast rule, because you can adjust computer settings as to how your computer responds to clicks. Out of the box, the computer is set up so that you usually double click on an icon to open a program. Once you are in a program and want to edit or save or perform any number of other tasks, you generally single click on those tasks.

Many times new users who are not really used to a mouse, will try to open a program by double clicking on the name of the program instead of the icon. Often they get the Rename option instead of opening the program. Point to the icon to double click and this will not happen. Not everyone develops a good user-mouse relationship. If you absolutely cannot get the double click to work for you, you can highlight the icon of the program you wish to open by clicking only one time. Then

click the Enter key on your keyboard.

Sometimes you want to move an icon on your desktop from one place to another. One way to do that is to click and drag. How do you do that? Left click on your mouse and hold it down while moving the mouse to point to the new location where you wish to drop the icon. Once you are there, lift your finger off the mouse and the object will stay where you put it.

Many times we enjoy personalizing our computers by changing the desktop background. To do this, go to the Windows button that opens the Start menu on the newer computers. If you have an Older computer, click on Start. Click on Control panel. Click on Appearance and Personalization. A new window opens. Here you will need to click on Change Desktop Background. This link is found under the larger grouping titled Personalization. You will be able to select from several pictures included with your copy of Windows or browse to one of your own photos and set

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Paragon Drive Copy 11 Professional

Paragon Drive Copy 11 Professional is sort of a do-all utility for anyone wanting to copy a hard drive. What I used it for was to clone my hard drive to an external drive connected via USB. I have a 1.5TB drive in my computer and right now I'm using about 450GB of that space. There are other programs that will clone the drive, but you have to have the same size drive to copy it to. The Paragon Drive Copy did great copying it to the 500GB drive with no problem.

I set it up to Migrate Hard Disk. I started it before going to bed and expected the process to still need some time in the morning. But, it was done when I checked it in the morning. When I first backed up the drive with Rebit it took much longer. To be fair, though, Rebit creates a database and saves the files in a special way.

Using Paragon Drive Copy is the ideal way to migrate to a larger drive, or to an SSD drive. Another use is, as they call it, migrate hard drive to container. It creates an image file of your drive making it so you can create a copy onto another computer. This is what many companies will do in setting up new computers so they all match.

One thing we should all have is a recovery disc. Their Recovery Media Builder can help you:

- Prepare the Linux/DOS recovery environment (included in the installation package) on external media (CD, DVD, or flash memory) to boot and run utilities under Linux or PTS DOS, and that way to get access to your hard disk for maintenance or recovery purposes.
- Create from the master CD the Linux/DOS or WinPE (Windows Pre-installation Environment) recovery environment on a CD/DVD disc, or flash memory.
- Prepare a bootable recovery environment from any ISO image, including their WinPE 3.0 image

Paragon Drive Copy Key benefits:

- Ultra high-capacity HD support (2.2TB) migrates existing system from

Master Boot Record (MBR) to modern Retained GPT (GUID Partition Table also known as Hybrid GPT) HDD and gain access to complete HDD capacity

- All partitioning (resize, move, creation) and copy with resize operations now take partition alignment problems into account with all volumes being automatically aligned by sector
- Dissimilar hardware support allows migration of existing system and makes it bootable in a new environment
- Copy features – copy a full hard disk or a separate partition, and resize a partition while copying
- Supports all major virtual machines: MS Virtual PC, VMware Workstation, Oracle Virtual Box, VMware Fusion;
- Basic partitioning features
- Refined User Interface – improved two-level user interface (Easy/Advanced) to satisfy needs of every customer
- Boot Corrector
- Empowered data safety and disaster recovery tools for both physical and virtual Windows environments.
- Updated wiping technologies can effi-

ciently dispose of data on any HDD, SSD, flash-drives and laptops.

- USB 3.0 ready: New USB 3.0 port grants the possibility to access to external HDD and Flash drives on the new high-speed version of the traditional serial port

Drive Copy 11's interface is good and easy-to-understand. The help that comes with it is very good with illustrated instructions to help the user.

Paragon Drive Copy 11 Professional is available for \$39.95 via download from <http://www.paragon-software.com/home/dc-professional/>

System Requirements

- Operating systems: Windows XP/Vista/7 and XP SP2/Vista/7 64-bit
- Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher
- Intel Pentium CPU or its equivalent, with 300 MHz processor clock speed
- 128 MB of RAM (256+ recommended)
- Hard disk drive with 100 MB of available space
- SVGA video adapter and monitor, Keyboard, Mouse

Additional requirements include an external USB hard drive to store data ♠

Lynn Page, Editor, Crystal River Users Group, FL, December 2010 & January 2011 issues, CRUG newsletter, www.crug.com, [newsletter \(at\) crug.com](mailto:newsletter@crug.com)

This and That or Things That May Interest You

Windows Explorer, Check Boxes

I use the Control key to make multiple selections in Windows Explorer but you can also use check boxes. With Windows 7 in Windows Explorer, click Organize and select Folder and search options in the drop down menu. Select the View tab and in the Advanced Settings window scroll down, check the box for Use check boxes to select items and click OK. Then when hovering the mouse over a file in Windows Explorer, a check box appears next to it. Click the check box to select the file. The checked box remains next to the file. Clicking it again removes the check and the box disappears when the mouse is moved away.

Windows 7

Run Multiple Copies of Applications

from the Taskbar If a program is already running, to launch another copy of the application from the taskbar, hold down the Shift key and click the icon.

Outlook 2007

Find Related Messages or Messages from Same Sender

To find related messages, right-click the message, on the drop down menu select Find All and then select Related Messages. The Advanced Find dialog box appears with a list of related messages. To find all messages from the same sender, right-click the message, on the drop down menu select Find All and then click Messages from Sender. The Advanced Find dialog box appears with a list of related messages.

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A Few Tips for Customizing Word 2007

When creating Office 2007 programs, Microsoft added new tools and settings designed to save time and simplify tasks for users. Some of us find that while we appreciate most of these features, a few are getting in our way. Fortunately, many of these default settings can be disabled or modified. Here are a few customizations that I have found to be helpful.

Add commands to the Quick Access toolbar: Let us say that you use a certain command often, like the Spelling & Grammar checker, but keep forgetting where it is located in the Word 2007 ribbon. There is an easy solution. You can copy any command to the Quick Access toolbar, which is always visible in the top left corner of the Word window above the Office button. To place a tool button there, first find it on the ribbon, **right** click it and select *Add to Quick Access toolbar*. If you have several commands you want to move there, start by clicking the arrow to the right of the Quick Access toolbar. Then click a command you want from the list, which puts a checkmark next to it and adds it to the Quick Access toolbar. You may have to click *More commands* to expand the list. In this view, click a command in the left pane, and then click Add to put it on the Quick Access toolbar, shown in the right pane. Repeat for as many commands as you want, then click OK. Tip: Be a bit selective or your Quick Access toolbar may get so long it blocks out the title of your document.

Control the space between lines and paragraphs in your customized Normal template: In August 2010, I wrote a Monitor article about how to customize the Normal Template in Word 2007 on which all new documents are based. Recently, I learned that even making those changes does not rid your documents of the extra space between the lines and paragraphs. Apparently, even Microsoft acknowledges that the Word 2007 line spacing rules are not easy to change.

Word 2003 and earlier versions used single spacing between lines and after paragraphs, which is what many users would like to get back. Word 2007's default setting is 1.15 pts between lines and 1.15 plus a blank line after paragraphs. A fairly easy way to revert your Word 2007 spacing back to the 2003 version is by changing the Style Set. Open a Word

2007 document. Click the Home tab, and then click *Change Styles* in the Styles group. Point to Style Set and click *Word 2003*. To make the new style set become the default in Word 2007, click *Change Styles* again, and then click *Set as Default*. If you prefer not to go through all those steps, Microsoft has created a little fix-it tool which will make these changes for you. You can download it from the Microsoft website at this address:

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/921174>.

Create Custom Page Margins: If the margins in your document are not set the way you want them, you can fairly easily change the margins to your liking. With your document open, click the *Page Layout* tab, and then click *Margins* in the Page Setup group. The Normal setting for Word 2007 is 1 inch on all sides - top, bottom, left and right. Several other choices appear in the drop down gallery. If you like one of these, merely click it and watch your document change to the new margin settings.

If you do not find what you want in the margins gallery, you can create your own customized margins. Open the Margins gallery and click *Custom Margins*, which opens the Page Setup dialog box. On the Margins tab, type your desired settings in the four boxes, leaving Gutter (the area left for binding or hole-punching) at "0" and "left." If you want these new margins in effect for only the current document, click OK. If you want to use them for this and future documents, click *Default*, and then OK.

Add the Right Kind of Date to Your Document: Many of us like to put dates in our documents to identify when they were written. But when we open some documents, we find the current date rather than the date it was composed. Word allows us to enter two sorts of dates and times: a date which never changes or a date which updates automatically whenever the document is opened. It helps to know how to enter both types since there are occasions when each is appropriate.

To enter a static date, just type it somewhere in the document or footer. Another way is to click the Insert tab and, in the Text group, click *Date & Time*. This opens a dialog box where you can choose from several formats for the date and/or

time. Be sure to uncheck the box next to *Update automatically* if you want the date to remain static.

To enter a date that updates each time you open the document, click the *Date & Time* button as explained above. This time be sure that *Update automatically* is checked.

A way to add a date with specific properties is to add a date "field." Click the Insert tab, then *Quick Parts*, then *Field*. In the Field box, select the *Date and Time* category. Here you will find several specialized fields, such as CreateDate, PrintDate, and SaveDate. A quick way to insert a field for a date is to use the keystroke shortcut, [Shift]+[Alt]+[D].

Get rid of the Mini Toolbar: Whenever you highlight a word or phrase in Word 2007, a mini toolbar of editing commands appears above and almost covering the highlighted text, which can be annoying. The mini toolbar is a new feature of Word 2007/2010. Its purpose is to put the most commonly used editing commands close to where you need them. For some this is a time-saver; for others, it's a pain. Fortunately, you can turn off if it bothers you. To disable this feature, click the Office button, then *Word Options* (bottom right), and then *Popular*. Remove the checkmark from the box next to *Show mini-bar on selection* and click OK.

Do you have problems with Office 2007 that need solving? Let me know, and I'll try to include them in a future article. Send to ndemarte@verizon.net.

Tablet PC continued from Page 2

Teachers are using tablets with great success because they are enthralling to children. Doctors are using them as a point-of-care device that can not only document the patient's progress, but can also help doctors explain procedures to patients. Artists are using them to create new masterpieces.

More and more applications are being found for tablets every day. With the new tablets that will be appearing in the next few months, this will be a very interesting category of devices to watch. Keep your eyes open, there may be a tablet PC in your future. ♠

Choosing a Mouse

The mouse is a useful computer tool. Here's a little history combined with information on the many different types of mice available today.

Many people seem to be curious how the mouse got its name. In the early 1960's, a man named Douglas Engelbart was fascinated with a theory he called "human augmentation technology," an idea that the computer should be used to enhance human performance. Up to that time, computers were useful only to military and scientific communities. In 1968, Engelbart made an input device to help people interact with the computer. The original mouse was a small rectangular wooden box with a cable running to the computer. Since the cord looked like a tail and mice are known for scurrying along a surface, this new device quickly became known as a mouse. The mouse turned out to be one of Engelbart's most ingenious ideas. Yet, Engelbart's original ideas were rejected, only to be resurrected later by others who took both the credit and the financial rewards. Because it frees the user from having to exclusively use the keyboard, the mouse is recognized as one of the great breakthroughs in computing.

The basic functionality and size of the mouse that we use today has changed little since 1968, but there have been changes in the technology behind the mouse. Older mice worked by a tracking ball on the bottom of the device. If you are still using this type of roller ball mouse, it is time for an upgrade.

The newer type of mouse is the optical mouse. The optical mouse uses a tiny camera to take thousands of pictures every second. It employs a light-emitting diode (LED) that bounces light off the surface on to a CMOS sensor that is similar to the sensors used in some digital cameras.

- Optical mice have several advantages over the traditional roller ball mice:
- They have better tracking and a smoother response.
- There are no moving parts to wear out.
- While dirt gathered inside of the ball and roller bars of traditional mice interfering with the tracking, the optical mouse is sealed and there is no way for dirt to get inside the mouse.
- They can be used on most surfaces without a mouse pad. The only excep-

tion is a mirror, glass, or extremely shiny surface.

Most optical mice have a red light that shines through the bottom of the mouse. The light can actually be any color. I have even seen a few that cycle through various colors, although I don't really see the point in that because the bottom of the mouse is usually not seen.

One of the newest types of mice is the laser mouse. This is a type of optical mouse that uses a laser beam instead of an LED light. The laser beam is invisible, or nearly invisible, to the human eye. The laser mouse is more precise and accurate, but also more expensive. It's great for professional graphic designers and some gamers might find them useful, but the average computer user won't see enough difference to warrant the increased cost.

So if you are still using a mouse with a roller ball on the bottom, you might want to upgrade to an optical mouse. Or buy a new computer, most of which now come with optical mice. You will see a difference.

Oh, and when you get to the store, be prepared to spend a little time in making a decision. You will find designer mice in red, green, blue, purple, and other colors. You will also see mice in many different sizes with a large variety of finishes. The

most important thing, however, may be for you to choose a mouse that fits your hand and feels comfortable.

Also remember that there are other input devices that can be substituted for a mouse. There are trackballs, joy sticks, and touch pads that can be used if you don't find a mouse comfortable. There are also specialized devices that can be used for people with disabilities. Some of these devices can even adjust for shaky hands and other dexterity problems. I use a specialized mouse called an Aerobic Mouse (www.aerobicmouse.com) that is especially designed for people with arthritis and carpal tunnel syndrome. It's a big, ugly mouse, but I love it. It keeps your hand in a hand-shake position that alleviates the twist in your wrist that can cause pain if you use the computer a lot or have carpal tunnel syndrome. It also steadies the hand, making using the mouse easier.

So take your time and find the mouse or input device that is right for you. Today, most mice attach to your computer through the USB port. This is a nice feature since it means that if you and your honey want to use different mice, they can both be plugged in at the same time and each person can have constant access to the mouse of their choice. ♣

Warner Mach, Editor, SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization, August 2011 issue, SEMCO DATA BUS, www.semco.org, Machw48185 (at) yahoo.com

Right Click Surprises – Windows XP

I have recently become familiar with some handy uses of the mouse right-click that are worth mentioning.

1. Right click on "Start" brings up a menu that lets you select Microsoft "explorer" and "search." This can be a quick way to get at those utilities.
2. If you want to use a program other than the default in conjunction with a file, then right click on the file and go to "open with." I sometimes use this with pdf files. My default for pdf files is "Nitro" but it does not have a search function, so I will sometimes switch to "Adobe Reader" if I want to use the search.
3. In the tray at the bottom of the screen is an icon that looks like a screen with radiation coming from it. Left click tells the status of your Wi-Fi connection. Right click gives options of dis-

able/status/repair. I was at a location where I appeared to be connected properly, but all of my browsers were unable to reach any URL. Someone assisted me by clicking on "repair" and I could watch the system rework my connection and make it better. I was dazzled.

4. The most important time-saver of all: If you are playing solitaire and you reach the point where you have won the game and it is just a matter of moving all the cards to the top row, then right-click on one of the cards in the bottom row and the system will do the remaining work for you. ♣

File Types: What are they? And why should we care?

Understanding File Types is the key to successfully organizing and using your computer files and folders. The File Type is the extension to the file name (the characters after the period). Unfortunately, File Types are hidden when you first startup your computer Operating System. I've always thought this was odd because knowing the type of a file can help explain what is going on, or at least what can be done with that particular file. (Because the file type can be changed using the Rename option, I suspect this was done to prevent a user from renaming the file type and possibly making that file un-useable.) Without the file type, confusion can arise. Hiding the file type leads to the appearance that there are multiple files in a folder with the same file name. While actually, the file names are different because they have different file types. It is only the file type that shows them as two distinctly different files. File Types can be shown along with the first part of the file name. In XP and Windows 7, this is accomplished in the View tab of the Control Panel's Folder Options Applet. Just uncheck "Hide extensions for known file types".

Let's start with some very basic File Management concepts. Every file in a folder has to have a unique name. (Two files may have the same name, but they must reside in different folders.) The name has two parts, separated by a period. The part after the period is called the file type or file extension. Typically the file type is three or four characters, but it can be longer. The limit is tied into the overall size of the path of the file in question, but practically you will see file types of around three or four or five characters. If you Google "file types," you will be amazed at how many file types have been defined and you will also see some pretty long file types, like the following 8 character file type, ".debuglog." In these lists you will see all the familiar file types like .doc, .docx, .txt, .rtf, .xls, .jpg, .bmp, .gif, .mp3, .wav, .m3u, .wma, .avi, .mov, .mp4, .wmv, and so on.

A few sentences ago I mentioned "path." The path is a unique description of where the file in question is located. Typically we think of a file's location as being in a particular folder, but the path is more general. The path starts out with the computer followed by the drive, then the folders in hierarchical order, leading down to

the particular file. So the path to a picture of a group of cousins taken on July 4th, 2009, might look like: \\Desktop2\D:Photos\Family\2009\FourthOfJulyPicnic\Cousins.jpg where "Cousins.jpg" is a picture (or at least a .jpg file) in the "FourthOfJulyPicnic" folder, which is in the "2009" folder, which is in the "Family" folder, which is in the "Photos" folder on the "D:" drive of the "Desktop2" computer. (Note that the "\ " is used to separate components of the path. Similar to the way "/" is used to separate the components of an address on the internet.) So you see the path to every file must be unique, so that the file can be unambiguously found. This also explains why we can have two files, with the same name and extension, exist in different folders. The path would be different, not by the file name and extension, but by one of the folder components. So, when all is said and done, the file type is part of a file's name that makes that file unique.

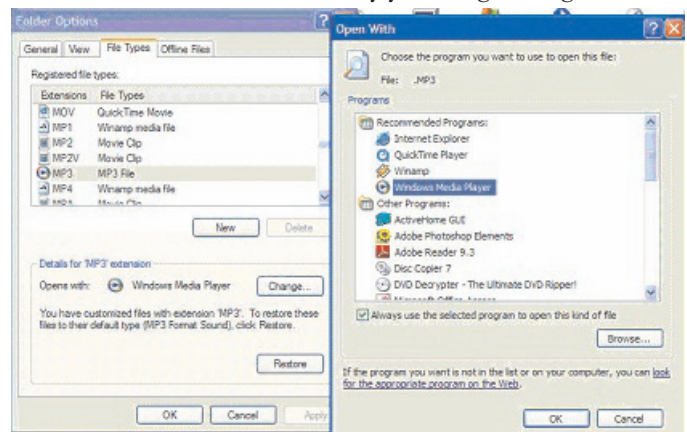
But that is only part of the story. The file type is really a definition of all of the data that is held within the file. (It defines in great detail just what every bit and byte in the file means.) And this is where Files and Applications come together, or where they become "associated". File Association links a file type with an Application. An Application knows how to handle a particular file type because of the file type definition. Fortunately, we, the users, don't have to know anything about the details of the file type, only that a particular file type can be used with a particular Application. So if a correct association is made, the Application will handle the file in the expected fashion. If an incorrect association is made, the results will be undetermined.

Many applications can handle many different file types. For example, Windows Media Player can use a whole host of audio and video file types, such as wma, mp3, m3u, aiff, wmv, avi, mpg, mpeg, mpv2. Sometimes when you install a new application, the application will automatically associate with the file types that it knows how to use. This may not be the associations that you originally wanted.

Some Applications are much more polite, and ask if you want them to associate with certain file types. If associations happen automatically, you can end up with different applications being used to handle a particular file type. For example, you could end up with "Real Player" playing your music that you originally had Windows Media Player associated with.

The Operating System provides a capability to review and establish the associations. Each operating System is a little different. In XP it is provided in the File Types tab of the Folder Options, Control Panel, as shown in the graphic example that follows. (The example shows the .mp3 file type chosen for a change (on the left) and the Recommended and Other Programs (Applications) selections (on the right.) In Windows 7 (and Vista) it is part of the Default Files Control Panel (Associate a file type or protocol with a program).

Associations can easily be changed, but be very careful. Only use the Recommended Programs. If another program is used, the results may be undetermined and may even damage the file in question. But this is the way you can get things back to



the way you want. You can get your music back to being played by your player of choice, or your videos back to being played by Windows Media Player, or your .bmp graphics files back to being displayed with the Paint application.

So, we care about File Types because they help to uniquely define a file's name and location, and their definitions enable applications to determine how to handle the contents of the file. These are two very big jobs for a seemingly very small (and often hidden) aspect of the Windows Operating System. ♠

Discovering Windows 7 – Part 19

Microsoft Windows uses small files called device drivers to communicate with peripheral devices like printers and scanners. For example, when you use a word processing program and enter a line feed character, the code for a line feed must be translated to a code your printer understands to feed a new line. Drivers can be for a specific device or a family of devices like HP LaserJet printers. Over the years thousands of device drivers have been written. Windows 7 comes with many built-in drivers to simplify the installation when you plug in a new printer or scanner into your computer. If Windows 7 doesn't have a driver for your device it asks you to provide one. This could be from a CD that came with your device or you can search the Internet for the right driver.

So what if you can't find a driver on the Internet? Your best bet is to check the device manufacturer's web site for Windows 7 drivers. If your device is old, however, the manufacturer may no longer support it and there may be no drivers for Windows 7. In that case, try looking for drivers for Windows Vista or a similar model of the device. Ultimately, you may have to buy a replacement device. The good news is many new devices are faster, do more and are less expensive than the old ones.

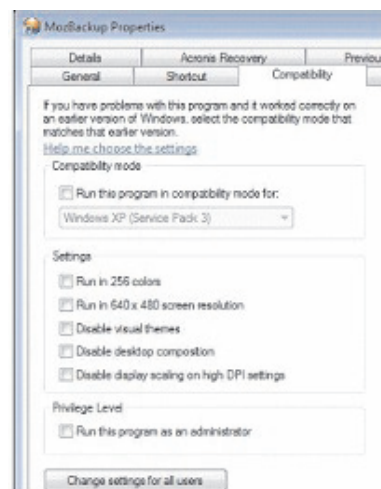
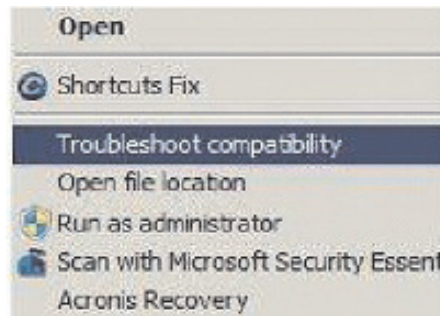
So what can you do if you have an old program that worked fine with Windows XP but now runs poorly or maybe not at all with Windows 7?

Well it turns out that Microsoft has thought of that and created something called a Windows compatibility mode. Using the compatibility mode you can tell it

to run the program using the settings for an earlier version of Windows (like Windows XP), limit the set of colors displayed, change the screen resolution and other settings. There are two ways you can change the compatibility settings. You can use the Windows Program Compatibility Troubleshooter or change them manually.

To use the Program Compatibility Troubleshooter, right-click on the program's name or desktop shortcut and in the window that appears, right-click on Troubleshoot compatibility and follow the on-screen instructions. If you cannot install the program, locate the program's setup file, usually called Setup.exe or Install.exe, click on Troubleshoot compatibility and follow the instructions that appear.

To change program compatibility settings manually, start by right-clicking on the program icon. At the bottom of the window that appears you will see Properties. Click on it and then click on



the Compatibility. In this example Windows has already selected Windows XP (Service Pack 3) for the compatible operating system but if you click on the box above it you will see a drop down list of all the versions of Windows that you can select from, going back as far as Windows 95.

Note that under Settings you can change colors, screen resolution, etc. Under Privilege Level you can restrict the program to use by an administrator only and you can change settings for all users.

After trying different program compatibility settings your program may still not work properly. If you have a really old program they may be a hardware incompatibility with your computer. For example, I have an address database program that was written to run on Microsoft DOS (pre-Windows). It ran in a Command Window in Windows 98 and Windows XP but it will not run on my Windows 7 64-bit operating system. Sometimes you just have to move on and get a new program. ♠

A review by George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society, AZ, April 2011 issue, TCS eJournal, www.aztcs.org, georgehardingsbd (at) earthlink.net

Pulse

Pulse is a wireless digital photo frame by Kodak. Its purpose is to display a series of photos in several ways, without human interaction. The frame is about the size of today's tablet devices. It has a receptacle for power, a cord with a wall plug and an on/off button. The back has a panel that opens to allow access from a flash drive or memory cards.

When you first turn on the Pulse, you get a step-by-step process for setting up the device, connecting to a network and establishing an account at Kodak's Pulse

web site. Once the account is set up, the site sends an email to the address you entered during setup. When you receive the email, you click on a link to confirm. Once confirmed, your account can then be used to upload pictures from your computer, from Kodak's site or by use of a memory card or flash drive.

I uploaded quite a few pictures directly from my laptop. The photos go first to the Pulse web site, then to the Pulse unit. There are other ways to upload pictures. For example, any email-enabled device

may upload pictures to the web site. Mobile phones can be a source and so can Facebook. When new pictures are added to your Facebook account, the Pulse is automatically updated.

Once you have photos loaded, they will automatically display one by one. The order of display is not the same as the order in which uploaded. It seems to be a sort of shuffle pattern.

There are a couple of options as to display. The default is to display one by one,
Continued on Page 10

Slide Scanning 2011

On the morning of October 22, 2007, my family, like many others in northern San Diego County, awoke to the threat of wildfires moving into urban areas. Though we were under mandatory evacuation orders, the need to leave was not urgent, so we were able to pack up our four cars over several hours. All the irreplaceable and important items we could fit were loaded, including photo albums, computer cases, external hard drives and my collection of 35 mm slides. We headed up to Orange County to stay for a few days, and fortunately had a house to return to.

Though our neighborhood was never really threatened, the experience left an impression on me. I've owned a digital camera for 11 years, and all of the 40,000 digital photos I had taken in that time were easily transported with us on a single external hard drive. Because I also kept a backup of these files in another geographic location, I was even less concerned about their safety. My collection of 7300 slides taken over 32 years was a big concern, however, since they occupied two large boxes and were the only copies I had.

Though I already owned three film scanners at the time, I had never gotten around to starting the scanning process, as I was still searching for that elusive perfect scanning method. I spent more time researching scanning options after the fires, bought a fourth scanner (a PrimeFilm 3600u film scanner) and outlined my new scanning plan in the film scanning presentation I gave to our group in 2008 (which can be viewed at www.uchug.org/Presentations/Slide%20Scanning.pdf).

Three years have passed since then, and I've only scanned a few slides. Unfortunately, I've found dealing with these thousands of slides is a daunting task. I'd found a scanner that provided good results, but with a scan time of 1 to 4 minutes each, I'd need to spend the equivalent of 3 to 12 work weeks (of 40 hours each) to complete the task. I could hire out the job, but even Costco's photo services would charge \$2100 to scan all my slides. Faced with a large cost in either time or money, I wound up doing nothing, and so my slides still sit in film form, vulnerable and degrading over time.

Fortunately my procrastination has managed to be beneficial, as there are now new film scanning devices available with

much shorter scan times. One of these is the Wolverine Data F2D300 35mm film to digital converter (www.wolverine-data.com). It appears to contain the guts of a digital camera, so it captures the image quickly all at once, rather than in a slow scan. It does not even require a computer, storing the photo files in a small internal memory or a removable SD memory card.

The unit is powered from an AC adapter and cable. The cable has a small connector on one end (for the scanner) and a USB connector on the other. The scanner can be powered from AC by plugging the cable USB end into the power adapter, or the unit can be powered from any USB port by using only the cable.

Operation is simple, with only four buttons on the top of the unit. The control menus and the image to be scanned are displayed on a 2.4" LCD display on the front of the device. The scanner can be set to scan slides, negatives and black & white (negatives, I presume).

Two plastic scanning trays are provided. One tray holds up to four slides in their cardstock or plastic mounts; the other holds strip negatives (up to six 35 mm images). The trays have a hinged cover with magnetic latches to hold it closed. The slide tray is easy to load; the negative tray requires more effort to align the film's notches with pegs on the tray's base. A loaded tray is inserted into an opening on the right side on the scanner near the base and then protrudes out the other side. The tray is shifted to allow each slide to be scanned. Detents in the tray help index the tray for each slide or negative, but you can also use the display to make sure the tray is lined up in the scanner correctly.

It is best to place the slide or negative in the tray so that the image in the display has the correct orientation, but there is also a menu selection to flip or mirror the image before scanning. The brightness of the image can be adjusted to some degree before scanning through an adjustment to the internal LED backlight. The brightness can be set to one of seven levels from -3 to +3 (+3 being the brightest, and 0 assumed to be nominal). By some degree, I mean that the "camera" inside the device also appears to have an automatic exposure feature that compensates for the brightness adjustment at times. This means that a

change in the brightness setting does not always result in a visible change to the resulting image.

To scan, the OK/COPY button is pressed once; the scan takes only a couple of seconds. The unit then displays a save/edit menu. A second button press saves the captured image to either the internal 25 MB memory or a memory card in the external SD memory card slot. I have only tried a 2 GB SD card in the slot, though the product's box says it is also compatible with SDHC (though this is the only documentation that indicates SDHC capability). The save/edit menu also allows the image to be rotated 90 degrees in either direction (for portrait vs. landscape orientation), though it appears it only changes to portrait mode on the scanner's display. All of my saved images remained in landscape orientation.

The scanner claims a 7.3 megapixel image, which was confirmed by the 3312 x 2208 (nominal) image files I captured. The files are saved in JPEG format with fairly strong compression; the typical image file size is 1.4 to 1.8 MB. The scans I made were of good resolution, with no noticeable compression artifacts. The unit I tested appeared to crop the slide slightly, so the slide mount was not at all visible. I made scans of slides and color negatives and both came out well.

To copy the photo files to a computer, you can simply remove the SD card. The unit must be connected to a USB port on a computer (through the power/data cable) to copy any files stored in internal memory. The scanner can be set to provide a slide show of stored images on its LCD screen. The unit can also display on a TV with a display cable (which is not included), per the documentation.

Overall, I found the unit I tested worked well, providing a reasonable image very quickly. Even allowing an average of 10 seconds per slide to scan (to allow for tray loading), I could scan my entire slide collection in only 20 hours. This would give me a good quality copy of all my slides in a short period of time. I could then use my high-resolution PrimeFilm scanner on only the select few slides where a better quality scan might be needed in the future.

Continued on Page 10

Color Code Outlook Items

Color categories can be assigned to items like messages, contacts, appointments and tasks. So color code messages, tasks, and calendar items relating to the same project with the same color. For an existing item like a message in the Inbox, right-click it, point to Categorize, and click a color category.

Reading Pane

The Reading Pane lets you read the content of a message, preview and open attachments, follow a hyperlink, use voting buttons, view the follow-up information in the InfoBar, and respond to meeting requests.

Preview Messages without Opening

View messages safely in the Reading Pane. Potentially malicious scripts or attachments are not activated or opened automatically in the Reading Pane.

View Email Properties

When viewing a message in the Reading Pane, view email properties about a name in the From, To, or Cc field by double-clicking it.

Turn on or Off

Turn the Reading Pane on or off in the View drop down menu.

To turn the Reading Pane on in the View menu, point to Reading Pane, and then click Right or Bottom to specify where it will appear. To turn the Reading Pane off in the View drop down menu, point to Reading Pane and select Off. On the View menu, point to Reading Pane, and then click Right or Bottom.

Preview an Attachment in the Reading Pane

With the Reading Pane you can quickly see what the attachment contains without opening it. But you need the appropriate 2007 Office application installed on your computer.

To Preview an attachment, in the message list, select the message that has the attachment. In the Reading Pane, select the attachment and click the Preview file button. To return to the message body, click the Message button.

AutoPreview

Another way to quickly scan through email is using AutoPreview. I personally use AutoPreview only and do not have the

Reading Pane turned On. It displays the first three lines of each message in the message list, along with the sender's name and the subject line. In the View drop down menu, point to Current View, and then click Customize Current View. Click Other Settings, and then click Preview unread items.

AutoPreview and the Reading Pane can be applied to any mail folders, like Sent Items and Drafts, but must be set for each folder.

Windows Live Mail

Options

Access Mail, Email Account, News-group, Feeds and Safety options through the drop down menus.

Write Messages Offline

Windows Live Mail saves messages on

your hard drive, rather than on the web. So when travelling or using an unsecured WI-FI write messages and read those already downloaded while offline. Then connect to the Internet to download new email and send messages you have ready and waiting in the Outbox.

Add Recipients to Live Mail Contacts

To add other recipients of an email, right-click on the recipient, select Add to Contacts and confirm the details. This works for recipients in the To and CC lists. Right clicking a recipient already in the Contacts list offers an Edit Contact option. ♠

The Killer App— continued from Page 1

mands. Training the computer may be annoying, but it is nowhere near as irritating as trying to get your dog to fetch, heel, roll over, and play dead.

Microsoft has thoughtfully provided a reference card which explains how you tell Windows to handle common speech recognition commands, keyboard shortcuts, punctuation marks, and other special characters. You can print it out from the **Control Panel's Speech Recognition** dialog box. Windows will not respond to "Go jump in the Lake", nor will it attempt to perform any anatomically impossible acts. Keep your requests reasonable, and Windows will get along with you just fine.

Smart phones are also getting into the voice activation business. Newer Android models have a neat application that does some very useful things. Google Voice Search is nothing short of amazing. I spoke into my recently purchased Android driven HTC Thunderbolt "Pictures of Ringling Causeway Bridge" and the result was four pictures of the bridge, including a map of how to get there from my Sarasota location.

I then tried "How far from the earth is the Moon?" This brought up a selection of web sites, one informing me of the distance in miles, and a second of the distance in kilometers. There were loads of additional astronomical information about

our nearest planetary neighbor, far too much to explore in one session, but lots of reasons for a return visit for the curious.

Next was "Directions to Starbucks". I instantly knew the location of all the Starbucks in Sarasota, and I had my choice of getting directions by public or private transportation. The application even offered directions by bicycle or foot.

In an effort to stump it I asked "How can we get rid of Khadafi?" Incredibly, the thing gave me an answer that might actually work. The Pentagon should be informed.

It effortlessly translated units of measurement from one system to another such as miles to kilometers, and yards to centimeters. It told me a gallon of water weighs approximately 8.35 pounds, and on and on. I finally stopped it cold when I asked it to change miles per hour into furlongs per fortnight, but that was probably unfair.

Google is doing a great job with getting technology to adapt to us. There is still a long way to go, but the future looks promising which brings us back to Star Trek. Whenever Captain Picard wants tea, he always asks for it the same way. He says "Tea, Earl, Grey, hot." Why can't he say something like "Tea, my usual?" I suspect the computer is smart enough, and the fault lies in the scriptwriter's lack of imagination. ♠

The only suggestions for changes or improvements to the Wolverine Data F2D300 I found are:

- Provide a JPEG compression adjustment, so that images can be saved at higher quality. The high JPEG compression is my main gripe about the unit.
- Provide a way to disable the automatic exposure feature, so the brightness adjustment works better.
- Provide a way to set the date and time in the JPEG file, so it can be set to reflect when the original photo was taken. The unit currently saves the JPEG files with a timestamp from an internal clock that starts from 1/1/2008 at 12:00 PM each time the device is powered on.

Tips and Tricks continued from Page 2

it as a background.

Sometimes, as the number of candles increase on our birthday cakes, we need to enlarge the text found on our desktops beside the icons that we use. While you are in the Control Panel and looking at Appearance and Personalization, you may want to click on Display and adjust the text size to a more readable size.

Have you ever tried to make a correction in a document you were writing only to have letters deleted every time you tried to insert new ones? Perhaps you misspell the name Kendra by omitting the letter “e” and you place the insertion point between the “K” and the “n” and type the letter “e.” To your dismay, you now are missing the letter “n.” So you type “n” only to lose the “d.” What has happened? Your insertion key has gotten turned off. Click on the insertion key once to enable it. Now you will be able to insert the missing letters. ♠

MEETING LOCATION

Silver Star Diner
210 Connecticut Ave. (US-1/ Post Road)

From I-95 Stamford: Take Exit 13 for US-1/Post Road and turn right at US-1 N/ Connecticut Avenue. The diner will be on your left almost at Exit 14.

From I-95 New Haven: Take Exit 14 for US-1/Connecticut Ave and turn right at US-1 N/Connecticut Ave. The Diner will be just ahead on your right.

Overall, I found the Wolverine Data F2D300 to be a good value. While I'd prefer it saved images with a lower compression, or ideally with a lossless compression like PNG, its ability to scan so quickly makes it useful when there are a lot of slides or negatives to scan. It may not scan with the highest resolution, but it is definitely among the fastest.

Chapter 2 - When Two is not Better Than One

The Wolverine Data F2D300 unit I used for this review was loaned to me by a member of my user group who won it at the 2011 Southwest Computer Conference (it was donated to the conference by Wolverine Data). After seeing how well it worked and how quickly it could scan slides, I purchased one for myself.

Unfortunately, my unit did not work quite as well as the borrowed one. Instead of cropping the slide image slightly, my scanner had a slightly wider view, so that the rounded inside corners of the slide mount are barely visible. This is not a problem in my estimation; I actually prefer this, so I can crop it myself later if desired. Unfortunately, the images captured are also slightly out of focus. The problem cannot be seen on the scanner display, but is apparent when viewing the images full-screen on a computer display. The files captured by the borrowed scanner are noticeably clearer by comparison.

I called the support number provided with the product (Irvine, CA area code) and was quickly connected to tech support. The person I spoke with confirmed that the focus problem could not be corrected by any adjustment, and that they would provide me with an RMA number to return it. Since I purchased it from Costco (online), I elected to save the return postage that I presumed I would need to pay, and instead returned it to Costco (at a store). I then ordered another F2D300

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scanner.

My second slide scanner was a keeper. The image was slightly clearer than even the borrowed scanner. Like the borrowed scanner, the image was slightly cropped, but this new one also had the image shifted down slightly. I am dismayed that this product does not appear to be very consistent between units in image quality, but at least I got one that I am happy with on the second try. I'm not interested in rolling the dice again. Now I can get my slides digitized before the fire season this fall. ♠

Pulse continued from Page 7

full screen. Another is to fill an array of four pictures of different sizes in one screen (a collage). Each of these can be modified by time, such as 3 seconds, 10 seconds or 30, as well as various ways of switching from one picture to the next.

This device is very easy to use. The screen is touch-enabled so there is no need for a remote or keypad. The pictures are displayed very clearly. The resolution is in part a function of the display itself and in part the resolution of the picture itself. The display's native resolution is 800 X 600. Internal memory is 512 MB.

Another built-in feature is the ability to have the unit turn itself on and off at pre-set times each day.

There are other versions of this product, varying in size. This one is 7” diagonally. It has a one year warranty. A forthcoming version will have a motion sensor so that the Pulse will turn itself off until it senses motion nearby, saving electricity.

About: Pulse
Manufacturer: Kodak
www.kodakpulse.com
Price: About \$130 ♠

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