



The PULP

HUGE this month:

May 20th General Meeting:

Discussion on Spring Cleaning for your computer. See page 4.

See you there!

East Hartford Public Library
Main St. & Central Ave., East Hartford, CT.

Q&A Session: 6:30PM–7:15PM
Meeting starts at: 7:15PM

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MEETING LOCATIONS

East Hartford Public Library
Main & Central Avenue
in the Lion's Room(downstairs)

Wethersfield Public Library 500 Silas Deane Hwy., Wethersfield, CT

Editors Corner

Hi there, this month I offer a cautionary tale. **BACK UP YOUR HARD DRIVE ON A SHORT & REGULAR BASIS.**

Last weekend I had planned to backup my laptop, but Murphy showed up first. I had done some emailing and decided to finish breakfast. I closed the lid on my iBook as I had done countless times before. Had breakfast and returned to the laptop, opened the lid and dark screen. Occasionally the little spinning ball would show up and I could hear the drive spin.

I closed the lid and repeated the first rule of computer diagnostics: DON'T PANIC!

I reopened the lid hoping it was just a minor hiccup. Then came the hard shut down and restart. No such luck, my iBook was in a coma, and I repeated the second rule of computer diagnostics: DON'T PANIC! All the while remembering that the last full backup was about 3 months ago & some of it difficult to replace, like my email.

Checking Apple support (from another computer)

yielded a few suggestions, resetting PRAM and PMU. Tried both with no apparent success. It won't boot. I then repeated the third rule of computer diagnostics DON'T PANIC!

I looked around for my original system disks, found them and booted up with no problem, so it wasn't a hardware problem. I used 'Disk Utilities' to test the hard drive & found some file corruption, but correctable. Reboot from hard drive & nada. Back to the system disk & reboot, and used 'Disk Utilities' to verify and repair the permissions. Again some problems, this time not completely correctable.

Back to the installer and reinstall the OS without reformatting. It worked & I backed up all my data. Then came the not insignificant task of reapplying all those patches and updates. Several hours later I was back to where I started.

Let this be your warning.

Stuart Rabinowitz

BTW -- see page 9 for backup tips (or click here)



A Little Computer Quiz

by Stuart Rabinowitz

The trivia and minutiae of the computer related world. The answers will appear next month or you can submit an answer sheet at the General Meeting. Good Luck.

- 1 Who is Mark Erickson and why is he part of this quiz?
- 2 On September 9, 1986 a rather significant event occurred in the PC world, what?
- 3 On February 19, 1990 Adobe released Photoshop. What was the original name for the program?
- 4 Who wrote the original?
- 5 On March 31, 1999 a commercial service began operation and changed the way some people watch TV. What was the service?
- 6 Who started the company?



Answers to April, 2008 Quiz

1 In 1980 Lynn Conway and Carver Mead published what has become an important text within the world of computers. What was the title?

A "Introduction to VLSI Design"

2 Marty Goetz did something first within the computer world, what?

A He received the first patent for software in 1965

3 In 1987 the Usenet rec.humor.funny list was created. It quickly became among the most read. Who created it?

A Brad Templeton

4 Many of you probably do not recall the intense discussion in 1982 regarding the structure of an email address. The original format was to be 'namedomain@com', but as we know the format became 'name@domain.com'. Who was responsible for putting the 'dot' in 'dot com'?

A Brad Templeton

5 Today many of us make use of "nonsequential documents", actually we call them 'hypertext' pages. Who developed the concept of "nonsequential documents" in the early 1960's?

A Ted Nelson while a grad student at Harvard.

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The Computer Corner – Spring Clean Your Computer

March, 2008

By Joe Shipley, Treasurer, Phoenix PCUG, Arizona

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While you're cleaning everything else around your home and office at this time of year, don't forget to clean your computer. There is truth to the saying, "A clean computer is a happy computer."

With the time we spend creating and working on our systems, we should do all we can to keep them running smoothly and give them long, healthy lives. So here are some things we can all do to prolong the lives of our systems. As a cautionary note: backup all your important items before doing any maintenance on your system. If you don't feel comfortable opening your system or editing the Registry, then don't do it! But what I intend to discuss here is not rocket science. These items are the same ones I perform when I clean my clients' systems.

Blow the Dust Out!

Dust is your computer's enemy! So get rid of it. The electronic components in a system generate heat. Heat is bad for a system. The more dust in a machine, the hotter it will run. When motherboard components get overheated, they "take a powder" and just shut themselves off until they can cool down. By keeping the insides clean your system will run cooler, thus letting it run longer.

Most generic systems have 4 to 6 screws that hold the case cover on. If you have a Dell, HP, Compaq, Gateway or other major brand system, look in the owner's manual or online to find out how to open your case. By removing the sides of the computer you'll gain access to its guts which is where the cleaning can be done. I use a small

hand-held vacuum to suck up the dust balls. I use the crevice tool, that's not the one with the brush. You can also use canned air or air from a compressor to blow the dirt out. Be careful not to bump or touch any components on the motherboard while cleaning. Keeping one hand on the metal case while you clean should discharge any static electricity that might have built up.

With the vacuum, don't forget to suck out the dust that has accumulated in the power supply. There are usually vents on the side opposite the circular fan. I vacuum out from both the fan-side and the vent side. Note: if you are blowing rather than vacuuming, don't blow air into the floppy drive or cdrom/dvd units. Unless they are filthy and already don't work, you don't want to risk getting dust on the optics inside. And remember, blowing air into a computer really just moves the dust from the computer to somewhere else! I suggest you do it outside, if possible.

If you have a mouse that has a ball, think about getting a mouse that uses laser light instead. But if you want to clean the mouse, open it up, wash the ball with warm, soapy water, and gently scrape the gunk off the three rollers inside. Your mouse will act like new after a good cleaning.

You can also vacuum your keyboard. You'd be amazed at how much junk you'll find if you just turn it over and shake it up a bit. I have even gone so far as to wash the keyboard to get rid of spilled soda. An hour or two in the Phoenix sun and the keyboard is ready to go!

Cleaning the Software

Before running software cleaners such as



Ad-aware, Spybot Search & Destroy and a good antivirus program (I like the free AVG), it makes sense to delete unneeded files and programs. Might as well not clean any more than you have to! This might be the time to use System Restore to create a Restore Point before you eliminate something you shouldn't. Better safe than sorry.

In the Documents and Settings area, look for the Local Settings folder for each user. If you can't find it, you may need to turn on the "Show Hidden Files and Folders" option on your system. To do this, open up Explorer, from the menu bar at the top go to Tools-Folder Options-View-Show Hidden Files and Folders.

Under Local Settings, I delete everything in the Temp folder. I also delete everything in the Temporary Internet Files folder also. Once that's done, I go to the Windows folder, and delete everything in the TEMP folder. Caution: some of you create your own Temp folders into which you may put things you might not want to delete. Check that out before doing a mass deletion.

Open the Registry

Again, if you're not comfortable editing the Registry, don't. You can back up the Registry (entirely or just specific keys) before proceeding. I mention this item in order to delete the "Compress Old Files" key before proceeding to the next step. You can either search for this key using the Find feature, or go to:
HKEY_Local_Machine\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\VolumeCaches .

The second key down should be the CompressOldFiles key, if it hasn't already been removed. If it's there, RIGHT click on it

and delete it. You don't need it. Close the Registry and proceed.

Clean Up Drive

To clean up your drive further, go to My Computer. For each hard drive, RIGHT click on the drive, left click on Properties, and then click on Disk Cleanup. If you didn't remove the CompressOldFiles key earlier, it may take a long time before the system responds. If you did, shortly you'll see files which may be deleted from your system so you can recover space. After cleaning these up you may see an increase in available disk space.

Clean Up Internet Explorer and Firefox

One of the easiest things you can do to keep your computer clean is to get rid of Temporary Internet Files that are stored on your computer. Here's how to do this for immediate relief:

? Internet Explorer - delete Temporary Internet Files:

1. Open Internet Explorer.
2. Select the Tools menu.
3. Select Internet Options.
4. Select the General tab.
5. In the Temporary Internet Files section, click the Delete Files button.
6. Do not check the clear Offline Content box. Click Ok.
7. Click Ok to close the Tools window.

? FireFox (Mozilla) - clear browser cache

1. Open FireFox (Mozilla).
2. Click the Tools menu.
3. Click Options.
4. Click Privacy.
5. Click the Clear button for Cache.

If you use Internet Explorer, go to Tools-Internet Options-Advanced and almost at the end, put a check mark in the box that says "Empty



Temporary Internet Files folder when Browser is closed” and IE will automatically delete the files when you close the browser.

Add/Remove Programs

In the Control Panel, you can add and remove programs you no longer need or use. If you are not sure, Google the program in question and then decide. You might want to opt to leave in any program you are not sure about. But if you still have games or programs you have not used in years, toolbars you don't want or need, or other items of no significance to you, clear them out. As I've said before, Google first, then if you're still not sure, leave them in. Often programs will have their own Uninstall feature. If you decide to remove a program, first go to Start-Programs and find the menu item of the program you want to delete. If it is there, check to see if there is an Uninstall menu choice and if so, I'd start with that before using the Add/Remove programs feature.

Spybot Search & Destroy and Ad-Aware

These are two FREE programs that do a great job cleaning up malware, spies, and other things that slow your system down. You can find them on the Internet at www.download.com, or just Google them. After installing them, make sure you use the update feature before doing a scan. These programs are updated almost daily, so it pays to take advantage of the latest updates.

Get Rid of the Language Bar

Control Panel, Regional Settings, Languages, Details, Languages,

Uncheck the “Show Language Bar” box to get rid of the Language Bar at the bottom of your screen. If you use the Language Bar, by all means don't get rid of it.

Keep Your Antivirus Updated!

Whichever AV program you use, if it is not updated you're not getting full protection! Security suites slow systems down! I don't use them. Google “AVG Free” to get a free antivirus that does a good job, and then configure it to have it updated and run it daily.

Task Manager

Quite often slow performance is directly related to the programs that are running. RIGHT click on the Taskbar to open and look at duplicate program entries under Processes – click on the title of the Processes tab to sort alphabetically. If you see multiple instances of the same program running, for example, outlook.exe, odds are you're having some kind of problem. If you're not sure about what a process is, Google it to find out or leave it alone. If you click on the CPU tab twice, you'll see which programs are using the most memory. Find the memory hogs, check them at Google, and then begin to end processes you don't need. If a process is critical, Windows won't let you close it.

MSCONFIG

Go to Start – Run and type in “msconfig” (don't type the quotes) and click on “OK” and look in the Startup and Services areas to check to see what programs might not need to start. If you know they are not needed, uncheck them. If you have a problem after restarting, then re-check them. If you're uncertain . . . Google the file names and learn about them.

Defrag Your System Regularly

Go to <http://www.auslogics.com/en/software> to find free software to defrag your hard drives. I

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The Switch to Digital TV
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The switch to digital is on the way. On February 17, 2009, U. S. broadcast stations, who are currently broadcasting in both analog and digital, will turn off their analog signals and will transmit only in digital. What's this mean to you?

Most consumers who get their television from a cable or satellite provider won't notice a difference. Cable and satellite companies are not required to make the transition, so they can continue to broadcast in both analog and digital. Eventually, though, if your cable company moves to all digital, you will not be able to get the cable straight from the wall, but will need a box from your cable company. Most cable customers already have a cable television box, anyway. Don't worry about that now, your cable company will notify you, if and when that happens. And it may be years down the road.

The people who will be most affected by the transition to digital are those who get their television "over the air" with rabbit ears or an antenna in the attic or on the roof. Older analog televisions will not be able to pick up the digital signal. You don't, however, have to go out and buy a new TV. You simply will need to add a digital-to-analog converter box to your television. These boxes are already available in stores like Wal-Mart, Best Buy, Circuit City, RadioShack, and Target. They will be priced between \$40 and \$70.

Luckily for those with rabbit ears and old

televisions, the government has created a \$1.5 billion coupon program to subsidize the cost of the converter boxes. This program is being overseen by the National Telecommunication and Information Administration agency. Each household, regardless of how they receive their television, is eligible to receive two \$40 coupons. The coupons are available now. As I write this, over 5 million coupons have already been requested.

To get a coupon you can apply online at www.dtv2009.gov or call the 24-hour hot line, 888-DTV-2009 (888-388-2009). You can also mail a coupon application to P.O. Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000. The program itself expires on March 31, 2009. The government is trying to get everyone ready as quickly as possible, so be aware that the coupons expire three months after they are mailed to you. Since many television stations are already broadcasting in digital, you can use the converter box immediately.

If you are still asking why we are doing this, the official government explanation is that switching to digital TV will free up parts of the valuable broadcast spectrum for public safety communications such as police, fire departments, and rescue squads. The bigger reason, though, is that some of the spectrum will be auctioned to companies for advanced wireless services. This, of course, will be very lucrative for the US Government.

It may also be a good thing for consumers, as well. With the digital converter box, even your old analog television may give you a better picture. You will also be able to see more channels as some broadcasters will choose to multicast programs. Multicasting means that a broadcaster can



split up its signal into several channels, each with a different set of programs. This type of programming is only available with digital broadcasting.

One thing to remember is that digital television is not high-definition television. Although high-def TVs will display digital television, you do not need a high-def TV just because of this transition. Digital broadcast television includes both Standard Definition (SD) and High Definition (HD) formats. You can watch both standard definition and high definition programming on an analog TV hooked to a digital-to-analog converter box, but the high definition won't give you the full high definition quality that you would receive on a high definition television.

If you have a newer TV that you purchased in the last few years, it may already support digital. Look at the markings on the television to find out if it has a digital tuner built-in. Words like "Digital Tuner or Receiver", "DTV", or "HDTV" indicate that it will display the digital programming. However, if your television says "HDTV Monitor", "Digital Ready" or "HDTV Ready", you may still need a converter box.

If you need more information on the move to digital television, check out the Federal Communication Commission's DTV Web site at www.dtv.gov. They have done a good job explaining everything you need to know.

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from Cleaning pg. 6

recommend defragging at least monthly to keep your system running smoothly. This is a nice program, FREE, and it's pleasant to watch. Keeping your hard drives defragmented will add life to your system and speed up performance when saving and retrieving files.

The suggestions above are based upon a system running Windows XP Pro. With Vista things may be in different places. The operation should be very similar, however, so doing a search in the Help & Support area may provide the answers you're looking for.

For a PowerPoint slide presentation with screen shots of locations referred to in this article, please visit <http://www.phoenixpcug.org/articles> and look for the link.

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from Quiz pg. 3

6 Andy Hertzfeld was the lead programmer on the Macintosh system software project, but he was not the first programmer hired. Who was the first programmer hired to write the system software for the Macintosh?

A His name is Bud Tribble.



Some Thoughts about Backing Up your Stuff

Stuart Rabinowitz

WHY BACKUP?

Eventually you will have a Hard Drive (mechanical) failure & you will want all those old letters

WHAT MEDIA TO BACKUP ON?

Choice of media consists primarily of an additional physical Hard drive (faster, larger capacity, but subject to failure), or CD/DVD (slower with limited capacity 0.6 to 4.2 gigabytes so you may use more than one disk, but with last a long time). You can also use floppies, Zip disks, or flash drives (which have similar tradeoffs).

You can and should make multiple copies on different media to be sure. Make sure you test the quality of the backups (definitely relieves the stress and paranoia).

WHAT TO BACKUP:

Don't really need to backup the OS or applications (unless you can't find those original disks). But it never hurts to have a complete, bootable copy to help recover and restore. I use 'Carbon Copy Cloner' and 'Net Restore', both of which are freeware.

Certainly all of your document files, music, pictures, and videos. Your browser bookmarks are as follows:

Safari--

Home/Library/Safari/Bookmarks.plist

Firefox -- Home/Library/Application Support/Firefox/profiles

You also want to back up your mailboxes, messages, addresses, and account settings as part of your regular backup strategy. To back up this information, make copies of the files listed below, if you use Apple Mail:

Copy all the files located in Home/Library/Mail.

Copy the file "com.apple.mail.plist," located in Home/Library/Preferences. This file stores the preferences you set in Mail Preferences.

Copy the folder "AddressBook," located in Home/Library/Application Support. This file is used by both Address Book and Mail.

HOW OFTEN?

Simply ask yourself how much can you afford to lose or need to re-enter (hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, & annually)?

HOW?

Can do simple copy of files to the media, use a backup application or upgrade to Mac OS X 10.5 and use TimeMachine.



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Membership: Anyone may become a member. Dues are \$12 per year and include a one-year subscription to The Pulp as well as access to the HUGE Public Domain disk libraries and BBS. Meeting topics, times and places can be found on page 1 of this issue.

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May 2008

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