

PACC TALK

Official Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club

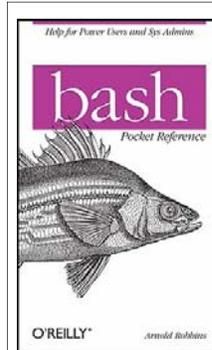
January 2011

MEETING SCHEDULE

Sunday, January 16, 2011

- 11:00 -11:25 am Sign In, Pay Dues, Greet visitors, Purchase 50/50
ROOM # 311 tickets (Optional), Setup Computers,
Connect to Internet , Prep for Meetings
- 11:00 - 11:25 pm PACC BOD Meeting
ROOM # 301
- 11:35 - 12:00 pm Windows New Users
ROOM # 301 Can we help you? V. Agrawala
- 12:00 - 12:30 pm General Meeting, . Raffle.
ROOM # 301 (pg. 1)
- 12:35 - 2:00 pm PC Decrapifier v2.2.5, FlashCookiesView,
ROOM # 301 Help By Leo (pg. 1)
- 2:05 - 3:30 pm More programs and utilities
ROOM # 301 (pg. 1)
- 2:05 - 3:30 pm Hardware SIG
ROOM # 311 Users Helping Users - guests included
- 1:00 - 3:30 pm Linux SIG, Members Helping Members,
ROOM # 311 Computer troubleshooting, Info Exchange
- 3:30 - 4:00 pm Pack Up Equipment, Doors Close

*** RAFFLE *** little



Here is a handy tool to help with your tinkering with Linux and even Mac OS X. Quoting from the O'Reilly web site:
 "You need to know how to work with the bash shell if you want to get to the heart of Unix systems, including Linux and Mac OS X. Now covering the most recent version of bash, this concise little book puts all of the essential information about bash at your fingertips. You'll quickly find answers to annoying questions that always come up when you're writing shell scripts -- What characters do you need to quote? How do you get variable substitution to do exactly what you want? How do you use arrays? -- and much more."
 PJK.

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Windows SIG

If you recently purchased PC, it is most likely then not loaded with some annoying programs you want to remove. To help you get the PC Decrapifier v2.2.5, free and portable, it does not install crap on your computer. Just copy it somewhere, or run it from flash drive. It is small download of only 1.28 MB.

Get it here: <http://www.pcdecrapifier.com/download>

From the web site:
 "How it Works ...

Simply download the file and run the EXE. There is no installer. If

you have anti-virus software installed, it may complain about this program because it is written with a scripting language. These warnings can be safely ignored.
 "Running the Program.... After you run the EXE you will be guided through the process with a "wizard" style series of questions. You will have the choice to pick and choose what you want to remove. It will not begin removing anything without prompting you first!"



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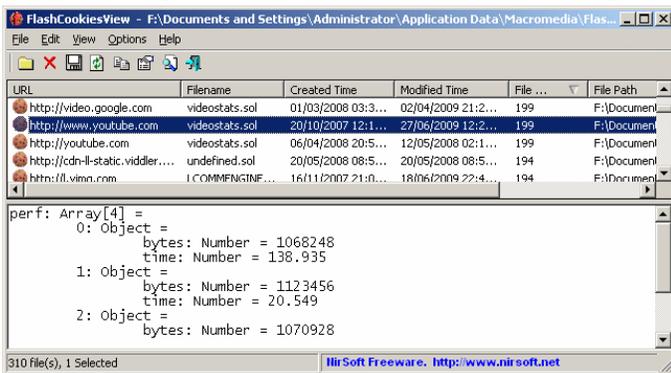
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Everyone is concerned with their privacy. We are bombarded with cookies on every single web site, all this in the name of better browsing experience. Often you can not enter web site without paying with an acceptance of a cookie, ..or two, or three... and on and on. How can you tell if the cookies are only collecting a relevant information? The following program, **FlashCookiesView**, can help you decide. Quoting from the web site:

“FlashCookiesView doesn't require any installation process or additional DLL files. In order to start using it, simply copy the files to any folder you like, and run the executable file - FlashCookiesView.exe“ ...

There is more to read on the web site, I suggest you do that. The download is not much, only 44.1 KB.

Get it here: <http://www.nirsoft.net/utills/flashcookiesview.zip>



While searching for some educational tools, I found

“Help By Leo”
<http://www.helpbyleo.com/>

The idea here seems to be to offer a database of “How To” solutions expanding the support to an ever increasing stable of applications. It is an another way to present the help files already available in most



applications. It is interactive, and animated, with a touch of Heuristics. The download is 11.3 MB, which does not seem much.

Going to the above web site you will learn that:

“Leo is an interactive help tool that helps you operate any supported software application.” “Currently, Leo supports Microsoft Office 2007, iTunes, Firefox and Facebook. In the near future, Leo will support many other applications.”

“Leo will not install any add-ons, plugging, or similar to any of your applications. All you need to do is download Leo and install it. We take care of the rest.”

The hardware requirements listed at the web site call for: Single processor 2 GHz or better, 1 GB memory, 200 MB of free disk space. Active Internet connection available. Software Requirements to install **Leo** is Windows XP/Vista/Windows 7 operating system and .Net Framework 3.5 sp1 (will be installed automatically if not available).

the end of the story

The Tip Corner

Compiled by **Bill Sheff, Co-chair, Novice SIG,**
Lehigh Valley Computer Group, Pennsylvania
December 2010 issue, The LVCG Journal
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Windows 7 AutoPlay Settings

With all the plug-ins we use every day here is how you can set them up to start and act the way you want. Click Start, and in the Search Box type, AutoPlay and hit Enter. Now just go down the list and use the provided drop-down menus to choose what each media type does when it's inserted into your computer. When you are done, press Save. If at any point you'd like to go back to the default Windows 7 settings, hit the Reset all defaults button at the bottom. It's a quick and easy way to get exactly what you want out of your Windows media experience.

What is the difference between Cut and Delete?

Do you think they are the same? In simple English, “Delete” stands for removing while “Cut” stands for replacing the location of an item. Both are basic windows commands but they work differently when you apply them on the data stored in a document or on files and folders stored in your computer. To explain further: If you are working on a word document and want to move a sentence to the earlier paragraph, you can “Delete” the sentence and write the sentence in the new location, or “Cut” the sentence from the present location and paste it where you want.

The same is true for files and folders stored on your hard drive or removable drive. You can move files and folders between different Windows partitions using the “Cut” command. Moving a folder from one drive to another drive, you have to first “Cut” the folder from the E drive and then paste it in the D drive. A Cut command is usually followed by a paste, the keyboard shortcuts are Control +X and Control + V respectively. “Delete” on the other hand is used to delete data from a document, worksheet, presentation or any other application. There is no keyboard shortcut for “Delete” because all keyboards come with a “Delete” key by default. You can select a file or folder and then hit the “Delete” button to remove the file or folder from your computer.

Another point worth noting about both commands is the way the data is stored after each command is issued. When you use “Cut”, the data is temporarily placed on Windows clipboard and moved to your desired location after using “paste.” But with “Delete” the data is temporarily moved to the “Recycle Bin” of your computer, you can later permanently delete the data by emptying the Recycle bin or choose to restore it by selecting the file and clicking “Restore.”

In a nutshell, the “Cut” command stands for reallocating while the “Delete” command stands for “Removing.”

Just the same way you move furniture around different rooms in your house (cut) and throw the unnecessary stuff in the trash can (delete). Just one caveat I would like to mention. If you want to move a lot of folders into a different drive you might want to consider using “Copy” rather than “Cut.” Once the files are safely ensconced on the new drive go back and “Delete” them from the original drive. Just a little safety tip here.

Show File Extensions in Windows 7

I always like to see the file extensions in Windows... also stuff like files sizes and where they are located on my hard drive. Is it a .txt file? Is it an .exe? Windows 7 hides this information if it's a known file type, but if you want to be sure...Hit Start, and in the search box, type

(Continued from page 2)

Folder Options and hit Enter.

In the Folder Options window, make sure the View tab is selected and scroll down until you see the option to Hide extensions for known file types. Un-check it and hit OK.

Now you can see all of your file extensions. To change back just follow the same steps and re-check the Hide extensions for known file types box.

the end of the story

The Tip Corner

Compiled by Bill Sheff, Co-chair, Novice SIG,
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January 2011 issue, The LVCJ Journal
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Want To email a Web Page?

Some sites, like PCWorld, have an e-mail icon at the bottom of each news item, review, blog post, and the like, but not all sites do. What's more, when you click that icon, you have to know (and type in) the address of the person you want to share it with. This could be a hassle depending where your address book is located. The most common solution is to just copy and paste the text into the body of an e-mail, but that can result in a loss of formatting and any artwork or video that might be included. Plus, it doesn't include the actual link, which is what most people want.

So, how do you share a Web page with someone? Simple: Click once in your browser's address bar to highlight the Web address (this works in both Firefox and Internet Explorer), then press Ctrl-C to copy that address to the Windows clipboard. Now create a new e-mail message in whatever program or Web service you use, then press Ctrl-V to paste the address into the body of the e-mail. Simple as that!

Your Web browser makes this even easier. In Internet Explorer 8, Click Page, then select Send Link by E-mail. In Firefox, select File, Send Link.

How to Share a Link, Part 2

Okay, above we showed how to copy and paste from the browser's address bar, but how can we share links that are embedded in text on a Web page. You know, the actual link that's under the hyperlinked text, not just the text itself. The long way would be to click that link (or open it in a new tab or window), then copy the URL from the address bar. But that's more work than necessary. To copy a hyper-link, all you need is our good friend the right mouse button. In Internet Explorer, simply right-click the link you want, and then choose Copy Shortcut. In Firefox, you right-click the link and then choose Copy Link Location. It's the same deal for Chrome, Opera, and Safari, though the "copy link" wording might be slightly different. Then head to your e-mail, word processor, or wherever and press Ctrl-V to paste in the link. Presto: You get the URL itself, not the hyperlinked text.

Force Programs to Run Maximized

In Internet Explorer and other programs, sometimes when you run them they open in a small window. If you want them to run maximized, that's in a window that fills the screen, there's a simple process for making any program start maximized:

1. Right-click the program's shortcut, and then click Properties. If you're a Windows 7 user and the shortcut resides on your taskbar, there's an extra step. After you right-click the Taskbar icon,

look for the program name in the pop-up menu that appears, and then right-click that. Then you'll see the Properties option, which you can left- or right-click.

2. You'll see the Properties window with the Shortcut tab already selected. Click the pull-down menu next to Run and choose Maximized.
3. Click OK, and you're done!

Just to clarify, the "program shortcut" is the icon you click (or double-click) to run the program in question. This icon might be on your desktop, in the Start menu, or on the Windows taskbar.

Transfer files within your home Network

It is convenient to be able to move files from one computer to another. But sometimes you can have some trouble navigating through windows explorer to find the path to the appropriate directory all the time. Here is an easier way to do that.

Most users don't even think about the "Send To" menu unless they're copying files to floppy disks, a procedure that is increasingly rare these days, because most files are too large to fit on one floppy disk. But adding entries to the "Send To" menu is a simple way to transfer files to fixed locations on another computer on your network. Open Windows Explorer. On computers running Windows 2000 or XP, navigate to Documents and Settings, open the folder with your user name and then open the Send To folder within it. If you're using Windows 98 or Me, the Send To folder will be in the Windows folder.

Now right-click within the Send To folder window and select New | Shortcut. The Create Shortcut wizard will open, and you can browse through the network structure to find the folder on your other machine where you want files to go. (On Windows 98, you may have to type in the network path, such as //Other Computer/My Documents/Incoming, rather than browsing.)

Once you've added the shortcut, it will appear in the Send To menu. To transfer files, just locate the file you want to copy, right-click on it, and select Send To from the pop-up menu. Clicking on your new shortcut will automatically send your file to the other computer.

Make the Most of Your Home and End Keys

Do you make use of the Home and End keys? Many don't! Here are three places the Home and End keys come in very handy.

In Outlook: While in Mail view, a tap of the End key jumps you to the bottom of your Folders list, Inbox, or individual message (depending on which pane is selected). Tapping Home jumps you back up top.

In Word: They can be very valuable. Tapping End moves your cursor to the end of a line, while Home moves it to the beginning. Ctrl-Home and Ctrl-End, meanwhile, jump you to the top and bottom of your document, respectively.

In Your Web Browser: Borrowing from word processors, Web browsers use Home and End to jump to the top and bottom of a Web page. The only difference; no Ctrl key required. Move Paragraphs in Word Using Only Your Keyboard.

Here is one more great pair of shortcuts for folks who prefer to keep their fingers on their keys and off their mouse: Alt-Shift-Up Arrow and Alt-Shift-Down Arrow.

When you place your cursor anywhere inside a paragraph and press either key combination, that paragraph jumps up or down, effectively switching places with the paragraph above or below it. I never knew that one.

the end of the story

Tips and Tricks

(Slip an Ace up your Sleeve)

By Bob Goodman, Newsletter Team,
Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA

November 2010 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News
www.clickers.org bob (at) houseplanz.com

Disable Laptop Touchpad with TouchpadPal

You have probably experienced your cursor jumping to another location in a document while typing on your laptop because your hand accidentally touched the touchpad. In order to put an end to this problem use TouchpadPal.

TouchpadPal is a freeware utility for windows XP/Vista/7, which runs in the background and will automatically disable the touchpad when it detects that you are typing text. It is lightweight and only consumes 10Mb of Hard disk space:

(The type/touchpad problem is one of my major laptop complaints; so, I downloaded and am using this utility. So far, it's working great with no problems. I don't even know it's running in the background ...Bob Goodman)

["http://tpp.desofto.com/"](http://tpp.desofto.com/) ¶ <http://tpp.desofto.com/>

Connect Laptop and Cell Phone Using Bluetooth

We can use Bluetooth technology to connect laptop and cell phone. We can move videos, images, photos, etc. from a desktop computer or a laptop to our cell phones. In order to use Bluetooth technology to connect laptop and cell phone we need a laptop and a cell phone which support this technology. If the laptop doesn't support it, we can use a USB Bluetooth dongle plugged into the USB port of our desktop computer or laptop and leave the rest to Windows which will find the driver and install it. If it is not supported, we can manually install it via the manufacturer's compact disk. Follow these simple steps in order to use Bluetooth technology to connect laptop and cell phone:

["http://tinyurl.com/244m6vs"](http://tinyurl.com/244m6vs) ¶ <http://tinyurl.com/244m6vs>

5 ways to speed up your PC

By following a few simple guidelines, you can maintain your computer and keep it running smoothly. This article discusses how to use the tools available in Windows 7, Vista, and XP Service Pack 3 (SP3) to more efficiently maintain your computer and safeguard your privacy when you're online. See how to free up disk space, speed up access to data, protect your computer against spyware, detect and repair disk errors, plus learn all about ReadyBoost:

["http://tinyurl.com/lf7np2"](http://tinyurl.com/lf7np2) ¶ <http://tinyurl.com/lf7np2>

Get a Better Battery Gauge

Over the years, Windows has gotten progressively better at laptop power management--but it still doesn't tell you much about your battery. Enter BatteryBar, a free, easy, ingenious power gauge that's compatible with XP, Vista, and Windows 7--and should have been built into all three of them:

<http://osirisdevelopment.com/BatteryBar/download.html>

Typically, you have to mouse over that tiny System Tray power icon if you want Windows' read on how much battery life is left. BatteryBar adds a full-time, at-a-glance gauge to the right side of the taskbar,

which, by itself, is mighty handy.

That gauge shows you either a percentage of battery life remaining or the amount of runtime left; clicking it toggles between the two readings. Interestingly, when you're running on AC power, the gauge switches from green to blue and shows how long until you reach a full charge.

But wait, there's more: when you mouse over the gauge, a pop-up window displays a boatload of additional information, such as total battery capacity, charge/discharge rate, AC status, and even a lifetime estimate based on historical charge/discharge data. That's what I'm talking about!

Although BatteryBar is free, there's also a Pro version that adds more features, like a graph of battery profiles, low/critical power warnings, and automatic power-scheme switching that kicks in when you switch between AC and battery power.

How much? The developer sort of lets you choose your own price: \$3 for a one-year license, \$5 for two years, or \$7-9 for lifetime. Pony up \$10 and you get two lifetime licenses.

While I suspect most users will be happy with the free version, I admire this creative approach to pricing. I love this program. Don't run a laptop without it.

the end of the story

Tips & Tricks –

(Slip an Ace Up Your Sleeve)

By Bob Goodman, Newsletter Team,
Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA

January 2011 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News
www.clickers.org bob (at) houseplanz.com

emailSTRIPPER

emailSTRIPPER is a free program for cleaning the ">", unwanted carriage returns, and other formatting characters out of your emails. It will restore "forwarded" or "replied" emails back to their original state so they're easier to read. It's simple to use, and best of all it's FREE!

<http://www.papercut.com/emailStripper.htm>

3 PC Problems You Can Fix

Ever notice how your PC has multiple personalities? In the course of a week, your computer may act friendly, moody, and sometimes downright mean. However, don't take a hammer to your PC just yet. The following is a list of common symptoms and treatments to help even the most troublesome PCs. You don't even have to be a psychologist (at least not yet) to deal with your PC's neuroses. Windows 7 and Windows Vista usually manage this automatically, but overall you'll find that these tips work for all versions of Windows, from Windows 95 to Windows 7: <http://tinyurl.com/y8m8en6>

www.wikihow.com/Save-a-Wet-Cell-Phone

Salvage a Wet Mobile Phone

If you drop your mobile phone in water or get it wet in a heavy rain;

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(Continued from page 4)

don't panic; it's possible to save it. Consider these easy, simple steps:

1. Act rapidly: First, quickly remove all covers and as many detachable parts as possible, such as the back cover, battery, SIM card, memory card etc. Next, take a piece of cloth or tissue paper and absorb as much excess water as possible. Make sure to dry it completely, before water soaks into difficult to reach places. If your phone was under water for just a short time, this quick drying procedure alone might save it.
2. Use a hair-dryer: Then, use a hair-dryer to thoroughly dry the phone and components; but don't hold it too close to the phone, as that may harm the electrical mechanisms. Pay extra attention to the battery area. The battery housing usually consists of tiny holes to let air (and consequently, water) into the phone. If steps #1 & #2 fail, then continue to step #3.
3. Drying for long duration: Place the disassembled phone and parts in a dry, warm place and allow the water to evaporate gradually.

also see: www.wikihow.com/Save-a-Wet-Cell-Phone

How to Secure a Wireless Network

We secure a wireless network to stop people without permission from using it. It's harder to secure a wireless network than a classic wired network. This is due to the fact that a wireless network can be accessed from anywhere inside the range of its antenna.

If you don't secure a wireless network from hackers, you might lose the service, or your network could be used to attack other networks. To secure a wireless network from hackers, just follow these simple tips:

1. Strategic antenna placement: Position the access point's antenna in a place which restricts the range of its signal to go further than the required area. Do not place the antenna next to a window, but in a central location of the building.
2. Use WEP: WEP stands for Wireless Encryption Protocol. It's a customary technique for encrypting traffic on a wireless network to block access by hackers.
3. Change the SSID, disable broadcast of SSID: SSID stands for Service Set Identifier. It is the recognition thread utilized by the wireless access point to allow authorized users to open connections. For every wireless access point arranged, select an exclusive and unique SSID. Also, disallow the broadcast of the SSID. Services will be provided as usual, but the SSID will not appear in the listing of offered networks.
4. Disable DHCP: By doing this, the hackers will have to decode the TCP/IP parameters, subnet mask, and IP address in order to hack your wireless network.
5. Disable or modify SNMP settings: Change the private as well as public community settings of SNMP. You can also just disable it. Otherwise the hackers will be able to utilize SNMP to get significant info regarding your wireless network.
6. Utilize access lists: For additional security of your wireless network, if your access point supports this feature, employ an access list. An access list lets you determine precisely which computers are permitted to access your network. Access points which use access lists can employ Trivial File Transfer Protocol (TFTP) in order to download updated lists periodically and steer clear of hackers. See page: <http://tinyurl.com/28tz3lg>

Software Review: System Mechanic v10

By Mark Mattson, Editor, Computer Users of Erie, PA

January 2011 issue, Horizons,
The Official Journal of CUE
"News and Information to expand your computing Horizons"
www.cuerie.com
cuerie1 (at) verizon.net

There's been many reviews done in these pages over the years, but I can't remember seeing one before for a utility suite such as the one covered this time around.

There are several popular ones on the market currently, but this is the most popular one, with a base of 23 million users according to the latest statistics. I am speaking of course, of System Mechanic.

This 12 year-old product is now at version 10, the most current release available, brand new for this year.

It's an integrated collection of system tune-up and configuration tools, giving you the ability to repair problems and optimize your entire computer from one central location.

The application is available to those users that run Windows XP, Vista and 7. Support for older versions is not available with this release. You also need Internet Explorer v6 or later, 30Mb of hard drive space for installation, and an Internet connection for license activation. Delivery is via download from the Iolo website (a 19Mb file).

At the present time, it is on special pricing of \$39.95, a \$10 savings. This allows you to install the product on all your HOME PCs via the Whole Home licensing concept, using the same license key. However, if any of them are used for business, you need to follow their Business Licensing regulations.

If you'd rather have a boxed product complete with disc, you may purchase the package at Wal-Mart, Best Buy, Target, and several other popular retailers (see their website home page at www.iolo.com for the list).

So what is System Mechanic? It is, as I mentioned above, an integrated suite of utilities and applications that allow you to tune up and repair problems on your computer system that cause slow-downs, crashes, and poor performance.

There are several ways to run the program. The first, which is the way most users (especially novice ones) is to run the system Analyzer, and follow the recommendations for repairs and optimizations that are given. This gives you the most comprehensive and automatic way to scan your system, finding the most problems with the least amount of effort on your part.

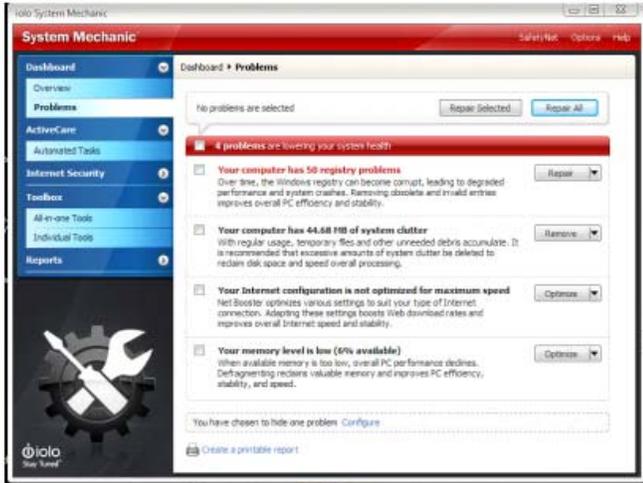
The other way, which more advanced users will find useful, is to run the individual utilities on an as-needed basis, giving you more control over what is performed on your computer.

When you first run the program, you are presented with the

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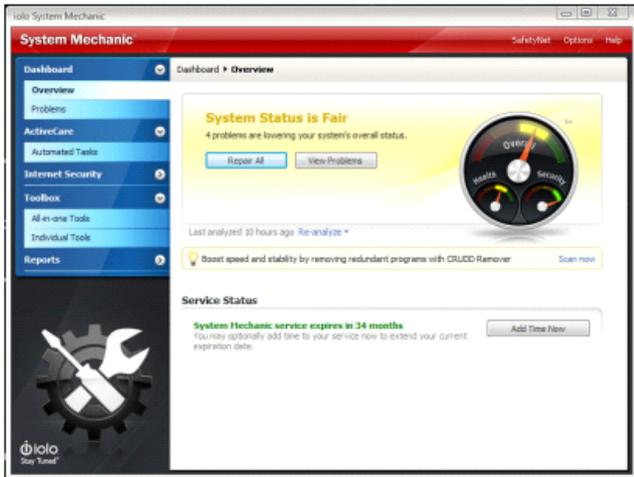
(Continued from page 5)

Dashboard, which is where you perform all major system operations:



As you can see here, the system I have the software installed on needs some attention...the indicators are in the Yellow zone. When the tasks have been completed and the system is optimized, they are all in the Green area, and the indicator arrows are all to the far right of the dial.

When the Analysis is complete, you are presented with a report of the problems that were found:



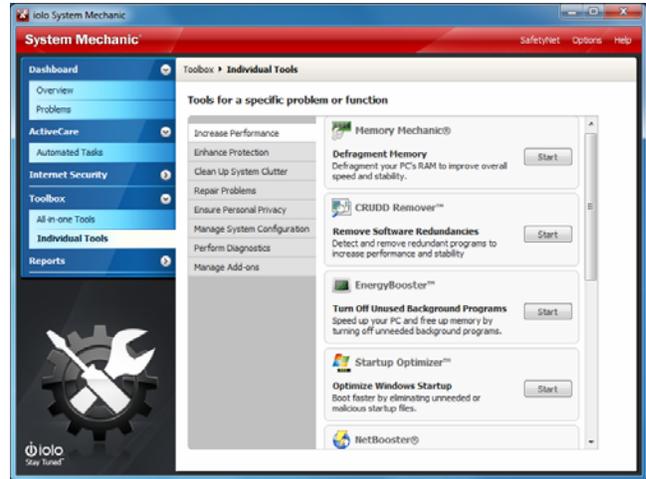
You can then repair individual problems, one at a time, by selecting it with the button to the right of the description. It will give you the choice to automatically repair it, or use a wizard to fine-tune the repair (such as choosing individual registry problems to fix while leaving others alone).

For most users, clicking the Repair All button will give you the optimum repairs needed to return your system to peak performance. Note that some repairs may require a system restart to complete, so be prepared for this...it will prompt you if needed.

Power users and ultimate system tweekers will find the Toolbox entry labeled as Individual Tools the place they hang out the most. Here one will find all the individual utilities that make up System Mechanic in one place.

Pick the category of tool you wish to use, and the components will

appear in the list to the right, ready for your use.



Besides the usual cleanup tools, which remove system clutter such as temp files and internet cache files, you'll find those that enhance performance in other ways: defragmenters for the registry and your drives, registry cleaner, program optimization (Defrag the program itself, to keep all parts together on the drive...which is different from the drive defrag utility).

There are tools that analyze your startup and give you the opportunity to disable unneeded programs to conserve memory and resources. There are also utilities that analyze and tune your Internet connection settings, boosting your web surfing and downloading experiences. And for even more powerful tuning and repair options, run the all-in-one tools in the so-named category to further improve your system.

I have been testing and using this suite on my personal systems here at home for the past couple of months, testing and tweaking different areas to improve my systems. So far, everything has worked as it should. With only one exception.

There is a tool called Drive Medic that you find in the toolbox. As part of my testing, I ran it, and was surprised by the results, especially on my wife's machine.

Drive Medic is a tool similar to the Microsoft CHKDSK utility, that checks and repairs errors on your hard drive, such as bad sectors, corrupt files, and so forth.

I had just replaced one of the internal drives in this machine, and was surprised to find Drive Medic reporting bad sectors on it. I ran it, and it kept reporting bad sectors and corrupt files on the drive. Subsequent repairs continued, but eventually the drive became so corrupted, I was forced to do a low level format on it, and reload the system from scratch. The drive in question was, as I mentioned, a brand-new 500GB Western Digital IDE drive. I ran the WD utilities on it, and it reported absolutely no errors present. But, again, when I got the system rebuilt, Drive Medic again reported bad areas on the disk.

In an effort to give Iolo tech support as much information on this problem as possible, I ran Drive Medic on my other two machines here, and had similar results: errors reported on all drives, while the utilities from the drive manufacturers (both WD and Seagate), show nothing wrong at all with the drives.

After contacting support, I was asked to try , Drive Medic from the

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

rescue disk you can create from inside System Mechanic. This disk tests and repairs (if needed) the Master Boot Record and file tables on your drives, in case your system become totally unusable and can't be booted. Running this test showed no problems with the MBR and file table, but did nothing to scan the drive itself for errors...which I found strange.

I am currently waiting for a response from Iolo support about this problem, but have heard nothing for over two weeks now. Probably due to the holidays, no doubt.

Overall, System Mechanic v10 is a very useful set of tools for maintaining and tuning your computer. It performs a wide variety of tests, and can increase performance slightly or greatly, depending on your particular machine's circumstances.

Is it worth the price? See for yourself. Download the free trial and give it a whirl on your system. But until the Drive Medic issue is fixed, I strongly advise against using it on your system. Stick with the Microsoft Windows-resident drive check utility to be safe.

For more information on System Mechanic, visit the Iolo website at www.iolo.com.

the end of the story

Keeping Your Computer Safe

**by Vinny La Bash, Member and Regular Columnist,
Sarasota Personal Computer Users Group, Inc., FL**

October 2010 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor

**www.spcug.org
[vlabash\(at\)comcast.net](mailto:vlabash(at)comcast.net)**

Sadly, the Internet is filled with predators that are scheming to hurt you in one form or another. Some are out to destroy your system and its data. Others are out to destroy you financially. What can you do to protect yourself and your equipment from threats that appear to be growing daily? Most of us are not IT professionals, and the odds are excellent that one is not living with you. Happily, a high degree of expertise is not necessary to protect yourself from all the nastiness waiting for you in cyberspace. There are steps you can adopt to avoid being victimized when using email, browsing the web, and exchanging documents with others. Let's take a look at some of them.

Install Anti-Malware Programs and Keep Them Up-To-Date:

Note: Rather than go through a list of recommendations, we suggest you start and end with your local PC User Group. They are ALWAYS the best resource for you to tap. Isn't that one of the reasons you joined? SPCUG maintains a Yahoo forum for the sole purpose of assisting our members. Go to www.spcug.org and click on the "Subscribe to the SPCUG Yahoo Group" link.

It's not enough to simply install a malware program. Unlike a Ron Popeil product, you can't set it and forget it. The publishers of these programs release signature and database updates often. If you allow these programs to get out of date, they quickly become useless.

If you make use of social media such as Facebook, MySpace or Twitter you need to be especially vigilant. Last year AVG released figures showing that the number of malware programs is increasing at an alarming level. Most of these programs come and go quickly, but new ones are constantly popping up.

Exercise Caution with Embedded Email Links and Attachments:

If you let your guard down, the chance of infection increases substantially. Your email client should have the capability of scanning emails and attachments for viruses. If it doesn't you are taking a bigger risk than you might recognize.

Before clicking on embedded links, you should access Web sites by opening a browser and manually navigating to the sites in question. This is not as straightforward as clicking on the link, but it's much safer because you lessen your chances of being redirected to a fraudulent site and becoming infected. The method isn't entirely foolproof, but it does eliminate almost all danger from bogus links.

Disable AutoPlay:

Connecting external drives, flash memory devices or a network drive can be a danger to your system. Some viruses work by latching on to a drive and automatically installing themselves on any other drives they detect on your computer. To disable AutoPlay go to Control Panel, open Hardware and Sound, open AutoPlay, select your device or devices, and choose the appropriate action.

Use a High Quality Anti-Virus Program:

The free anti-virus program bundled with your ISP connection rarely has the capabilities required to safeguard your computer. Use a professional business grade program that offers automatic upgrades and features such as rootkit protection and customized scans.

Use Real-time Anti-Spyware:

No single anti-virus program with integrated spyware protection can do an adequate job of defending you. That is also true of most free-ware programs because they are simply overwhelmed by the constant flood of new spyware threats. Contact your user group for the most effective programs.

Daily Scans:

Since nothing offers complete protection, you should be proactive in defending your computer against attacks. The sheer number of new cyber menaces makes it virtually inevitable that one of them will eventually somehow bypass your security and infect your system. You may even have inadvertently allowed one of these programs to be installed on your system by clicking OK on a dialog box you didn't inspect closely enough.

If you're infected, you're infected. Once that happens the how of it doesn't matter. You need to clean your system as quickly as possible. Daily scans add an additional layer of protection. They are an invaluable tool of detecting and removing malware. Even if you can't immediately remove the threat you can quarantine it until you can.

Use Common Sense While Surfing the Web:

There are useful plug-ins for your browser that provide automatic protection without interfering with normal operations. Some guard against phishing attacks, others warn you about Trojans, and still more alert you to possible scams or attempts to steal personal or financial information. Which ones are they? Contact your user group! You can't find a better source of up-to-date information.

Protecting yourself is mostly a matter of common sense. You wouldn't leave your house with all the doors and windows open and unlocked. Why leave yourself exposed when you enter cyberspace?

the end of the story

Tips for Ensuring Your Privacy on the Internet

By Dick Maybach
n2nd@charter.net

When posting information to the Internet, keep three things in mind:

1. you can't restrict where it will go;
2. you can't restrict who will see it; and
3. it will stay there forever.

If you want to keep something private, don't post it.

In the old (pre-Internet) days, if something you told a friend in confidence became public, it was his word against yours. It's much harder to deny a picture of you or an e-mail with your return address. Information about you is most commonly posted on your personal Web site, on social networks, such as Facebook, and on photo sharing sites, such as Flickr. Very few people would post their social security numbers or bank passwords, but you must also be careful with other data.

Be careful about disclosing information that could be used by an identity thief; this includes your birthday, address, and phone number. Although much of this is readily available, you don't want to make a thief's job easy. Your strategy here is like that of locking your car and house; it's not difficult to break into these, but if your neighbor doesn't lock up, he provides an easier, more attractive target.

Keep personal data private

Don't forget that many banks make available hint questions to "help" you if you forget your password, so you should not disseminate personal data used in the hint questions, such as your mother's maiden name, your high school, your pet names, etc. You should avoid taking the quizzes offered by some social websites, as they often ask the same questions about your personal life that are used in password hints.

Don't advertise when you will be away, even for a short time. The time to talk about your cruise or a concert is after you return home. You wouldn't put a note on your door saying that you will out for several hours or days, and you certainly don't want to do this on the Internet, where the information is available to many more people.

Protect your children. Don't disclose their names, ages, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, or where they attend school, especially if you show their pictures. Small children should not have a computer in their bedroom; instead it should be in a public area of the house where you can check on their on-line activities. If your children have a social Web site, insist that you be a "friend" and check it often. This has to be done carefully, especially with teens, lest you appear to be meddling. However, since they already think you are a fossil, you probably won't damage your reputation much.

Although it isn't a privacy issue, don't publicly criticize your company or boss. While we would like to think that our employers are tolerant, some aren't, and an intemperate outburst could damage your career. This is especially true if your remarks could be interpreted as racial, religious, or sexual bias, as these could expose you to legal prosecution. Indeed, you will most likely regret any public tirade. At the least, it will make your friends think less of you. This also applies to e-mail. If you are really teamed, don't mail it immediately but let it sit as a draft for a day; then read it carefully after you have calmed down.



From the Editor's desk

Hi PACCsters!



It seems the next Steelers game is on Saturday, January 15, 2011 and it will not interfere with PACC Meeting on Sunday. Good. Unless the weather ?

Required reading list:

The Tip Corner Dec. 10 Compiled by Bill Sheff

The Tip Corner Jan. 11 Compiled by Bill Sheff

Tips and Tricks Nov. 10 by Bob Goodman

Tips and Tricks Jan. 11 by Bob Goodman

Software Review: System Mechanic v10 by Mark Mattson

Keeping Your Computer Safe ... by Vinny La Bash

Tips for Ensuring Your Privacy on the Internet by Dick Maybach

I'll see all you at the January 16, 2011 meeting. PJK

IMPORTANT NOTICE

There may be some changes soon to the APCUG web hosting and with it the URL. The switch is to take place by December 19, 2010. As of now, that is all I know about it. I will let you know as soon as it happen, by e-mail of course!

Please have patience waiting for a new address of PACC Web. As soon as the migration is resolved I will send out the information.

Don't disclose risky behavior

Don't disclose any risky behavior in which you indulge. If you like to smoke, drink, rock climb, race cars, explore caves, or hang glide, your insurance company could decide they won't pay a future claim, because you failed to disclose the extra risks associated with such activities. As far as I know, they aren't yet doing this yet, but why take the chance they might begin, say 20 years from now,

Be very careful about posting pictures of you or your friends in compromising situations. Young people are especially likely to be trapped by this. In the recent election campaign, some candidates had to live down pictures taken at parties when they were in their teens and twenties. This is a difficult problem, since cell phone cameras are now ubiquitous and such pictures are often published by "friends." You can contact the Web site and demand that the offending material be removed, but a better strategy is to be careful in public.

Even though you never publish anything, information about you is splattered all over the Internet. For example, a search for "Dick Maybach" produces almost 600 hits, and because my name is unusual, most of the them are about me. If you have a common name, you can to some extent hide in the haystack; for example, "John Doe" produces almost 3,000,000 hits. However, even with a common name, adding a few details, such as your city (for example "John Doe" and "Middletown NJ"), will greatly improve the relevance of the results. If you find something to which you really object, you can contact the site and ask that it be removed, but success here is doubtful.

Finally, use the maximum privacy settings that your social networking site provides. In particular, limit access to your page to designated friends. Remember, that these sites make their money by disclosing your information to others. While it may be more convenient to use such sites than to send e-mails to friends, it adds substantial risk.

the end of the story

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FOR PACC: (Please print in CAPS)

NAME.....DATE.....

ADDRESS.....COMPANY.....

CITY.....STATE.....ZIP+4.....

PHONE.....E-MAIL.....

OCCUPATION.....

INTERESTS.....

RECOMMENDED BY PACC MEMBER.....

Dues: \$25 per year.

Make your check out to: PACC and send it with your application to:

Treasurer, PACC, P.O. Box 6435, Pittsburgh, PA 15212-6435

cut here.....cut here

PACC HELP LINE

Help is available to PACC members on various computer topics by contacting one of those listed below. It is recommended that the initial contact with any of these experts should be made via the PACC WEB SITE. In this way others can benefit from the questions and responses. Be courteous and call only during the listed times.

NAME	COMPUTER AREA	PHONE	TIME
Agrawala, Vishnu	Hardware	724-553-8051	3 - 6:00 pm
Cutrara, Phil	Geoworks	766-0274	
Fisher, Bill	Cobol, Word Perfect	367-8996	7 - 9:00 pm
Konecny, P.	Windows, DOS 6.2x, MS IE., Hardware	795-6075	8 - 9:00 pm

If you would like to become PACC HELP LINE volunteer inform the editor by sending e-mail to: pacccomm@aol.com

FOR SALE

Your ads PACCsters?

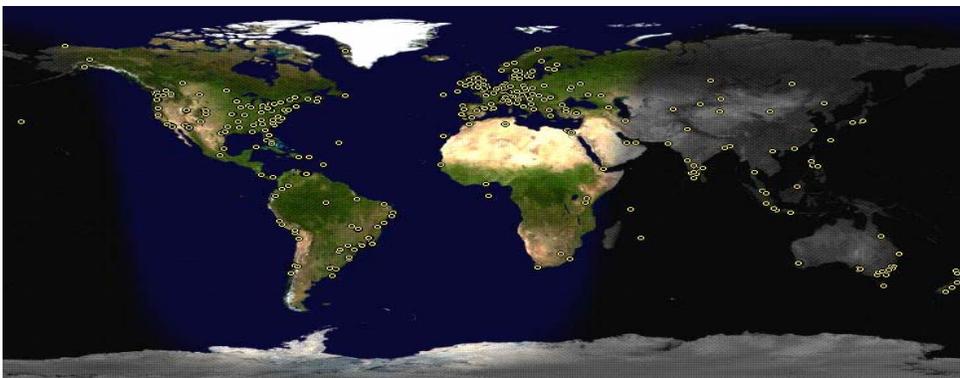


Classified ads. Buy, Sell, Trade. Members may place free ads (up to 5 lines). For commercial ads send an inquiry to: PACCCOMM@Aol.com

ATTENTION:
IF YOU HAVE NOTICED THAT THE EXPIRATION DATE ON YOUR LABEL DOES NOT REFLECT CORRECTLY YOUR MEMBERSHIP STATUS OR HAVE AN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU WANT TO SHARE SEND E-MAIL DIRECTLY TO: pacccomm@aol.com

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NEXT PACC MEETING IS ON JANUARY 16, 2011

PACC 1975 - 2011
IN ITS THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR



PACC TALK

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NEXT MEETING: January 16, 2011

The Pittsburgh Area Computer Club (PACC) holds its meetings the **THIRD** Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be in room 311 at **Point Park University**, Wood St. and Blvd. of the Allies. The doors open at 11:00 am and close at 4:30 pm. Bring your PC!
NOTICE THE EXPIRATION DATE ON THE MAILING LABEL OF YOUR NEWSLETTER.
You won't get your newsletter if you let your membership expire. Renew your Memberships !!! Send a check or money order for \$25 made out to 'PACC' and addressed to Treasurer, PACC, P.O. Box 6435, Pittsburgh, PA 15212-6435.
Classified ads. Buy, Sell, Trade. Members may place free ads (up to 5 lines). Articles should be prepared in plain ASCII text. **WITHOUT** formatting. Deadline for articles is the 25th of the month. Send them to P.J. Konecny, P.O. Box 557, Monroeville, PA 15146.
PACC homepage can be found at: <http://pacc.apcug.org>

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