PACC TALK

Official Newsletter of the Pittsburgh Area Computer Club **August 2010**

MEETING SCHEDULE

Sunday, August 15, 2010

11:00 -11:25 am ROOM # 311	**Sign In, Pay Dues, Greet visitors, Purchase 50/50 tickets (Optional), Setup Computers, Connect to Internet , Prep for Meetings**	
11:00 - 11:25 pm ROOM # 301	**PACC BOD Meeting**	
11:35 - 12:00 pm ROOM # 301	**Windows New Users Can we help you? V. Agrawala**	
12:00 - 12:30 pm ROOM # 301	**General Meeting, Raffle.**	**(pg. 1)**
12:35 - 2:00 pm ROOM # 301	**Nitro PDF Reader, Dexpot, System Spec, Soluto Anti-Frustration Software**	**(pg. 1)**
2:05 - 3:30 pm ROOM # 301	**More programs and utilities ….. **	**(pg. 1)**
2:05 - 3:30 pm ROOM # 311	**Hardware SIG Users Helping Users - guests included**	
1:00 - 3:30 pm ROOM # 311	**Linux SIG, Members Helping Members, Computer troubleshooting, Info Exchange**	
3:30 - 4:00 pm	**Pack Up Equipment, Doors Close**	

What is inside....

Windows SIG	**PAGE # 1**
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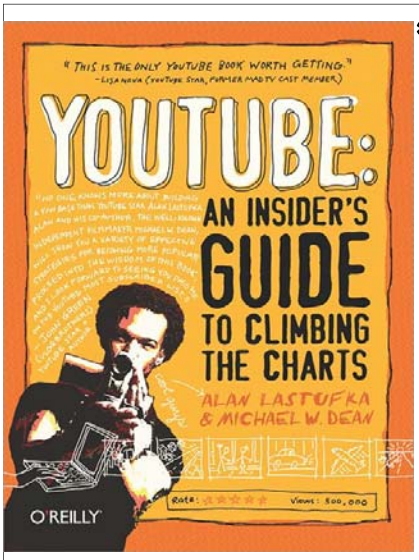
Windows SIG

Nitro PDF Reader.
This is for those of you who would like to have an easier time of opening PDF files in your web browsers. As it claims on the web site "Nitro Reader offers features and functionality far beyond typical PDF readers, and makes working with PDF easier than ever before." Read more on the web site, this is a very capable program!

Download size is respectable 22.6 MB. To get it go here:
http://www.nitroreader.com/download/download.aspx



*** RAFFLE ***

From O'Reilly web site: "If you want to make a splash on YouTube with your videos, this book shows you what it takes. It's written by two YouTube veterans who know how to make quality video art, and have the subscribers and millions of views to prove it. They'll take you through the basics, and will teach you how to write, shoot, edit, optimize, upload, and promote your work."

Learn more about it at http://oreilly.com/catalog/9780596521158

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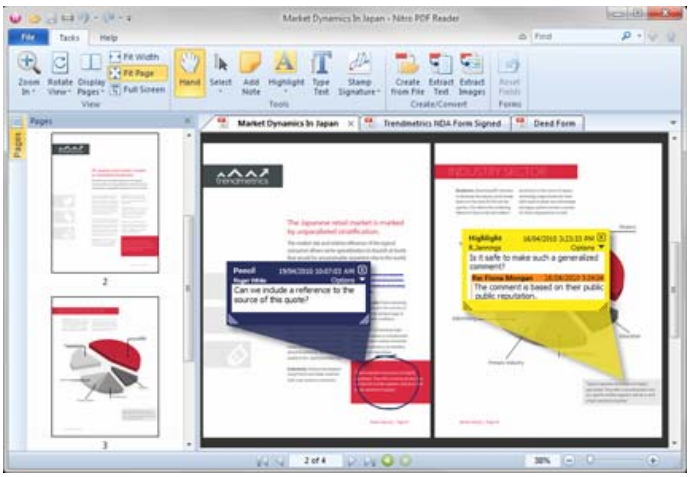


(Continued from page 1)

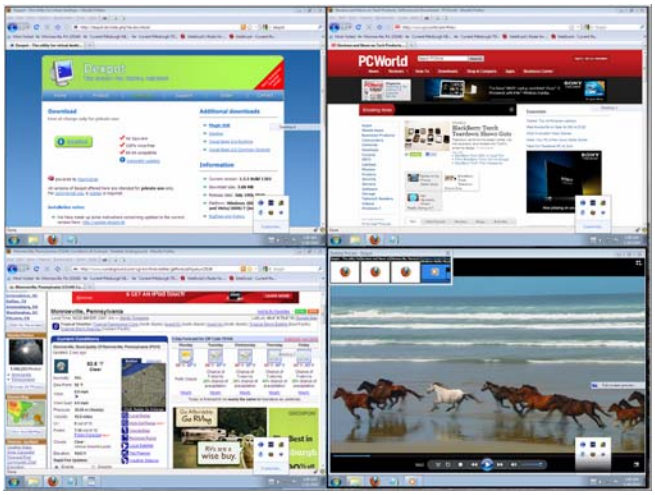
Dexpot 1.5 - Free of charge only for private use!

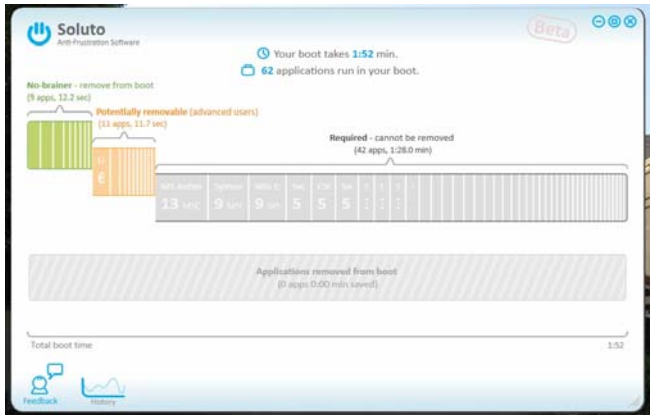
Just exactly what I need, and yes, it really works! From the web site: "Dexpot 1.5 turns your monitor into up to 20. Dexpot creates additional workspaces you can quickly switch between."….. "Different icons, wallpapers, start-ups, and much more can be configured for each desktop."

For example, I have Desktop1 parked at the Dexpot web site , observe the PC World web site for technical news on Desktop 2, keep an eye on the local weather on Desktop 3, and watch a video on Desktop 4.

It is only a small 3.9 MB download. You can get this program at:

http://dexpot.de/index.php?id=download





SOLUTO

There is an article in this issue of PACC TALK which reviews this promising program. "**Soluto Anti-Frustration Software Improves Boot Time**" by Ira Wilsker.

The demand for this program is so high, so goes the claim, to get the download, one must go to the web site and get in line.

Right here: **http://www.soluto.com/**

So I did! It has been several days now….still waiting… maybe I'll get it before the PACC meeting on August 15, 2010. If so we will test it!

(Continued on page 8)

THIS AND THAT – May 2010

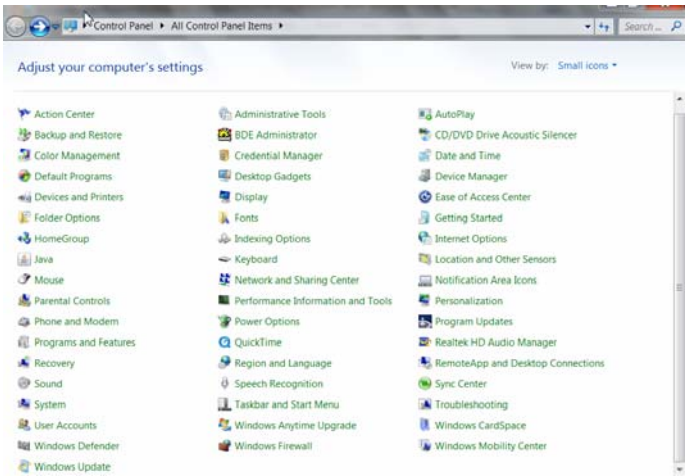
By Elizabeth B. Wright,
Contributor to ccOKC Monitor, Computer Club of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
www.ccokc.org / wright599new (at) sbcglobal.net

As we get deeper and deeper into Windows7 we find ourselves spending far too much time overcoming the things we don't like about it. Overall, it seems to be a good operating system but, as usual, it assumes settings which are not what some of us want. Then it has convoluted the process of changing those settings so that we are forced to work very hard to learn how to make our own changes. With the problems I have had with external hard drives that won't work with 7, I was about to revert to VISTA where those same drives worked just fine. But instead opted to go forward and try to get things going in 7. But my desktop was a real visual problem for me. Whoever designed the new icon/font combination must have been in never-never land. (That translates to Microsoft). Those hollow fonts with the drop shadow are not only useless but almost invisible to anyone over the age of 40. I found I could change the font for the icons but not the color. That seems to be controlled by Windows itself. I finally changed the "theme" to High Contrast/White, and then overlaid that with the picture of my choice. For now, I have black text on my desktop. Maybe that is good, maybe not. We'll see.

But as we all know, there is always the internet. Remember that following links can be hazardous to your computer's health, but hopefully the one below is okay. I found a good forum site which addressed the problem and I now have my good old black, 12pt Arial font gracing the icons on my desktop. I used a website at:

http://www.sevenforums.com/general-discussion/27473-desktop-icon-fonts-unreadable.html

This immediately told me where to go and how to change the font. It was located under Start/Control Panel/System/Advanced System Settings. I decided to use the custom settings option and actually took out practically everything. I will probably decide later to reactivate some of the items, but for now I will see how I get along without them. You probably should be more careful, making sure you know which options to uncheck and which to leave alone, but I chose to be reckless and uncheck nearly all of the boxes. Since I have toyed with the idea of reinstalling the operating system anyway, I figured it wouldn't hurt it any. Of course, I probably will be proven wrong. (I know, proven/proved. I am from the "Old School" of grammar.)



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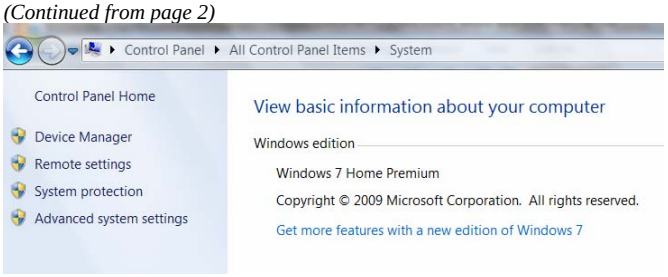

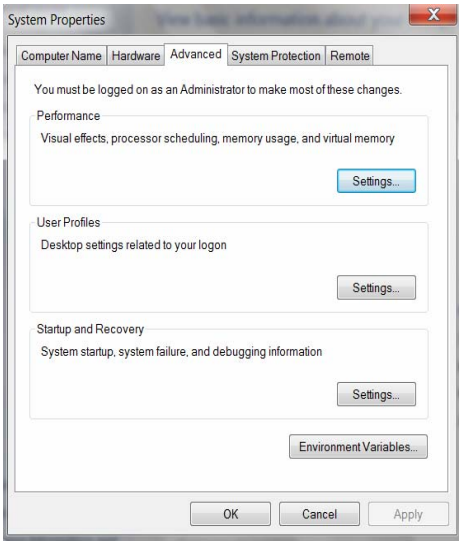

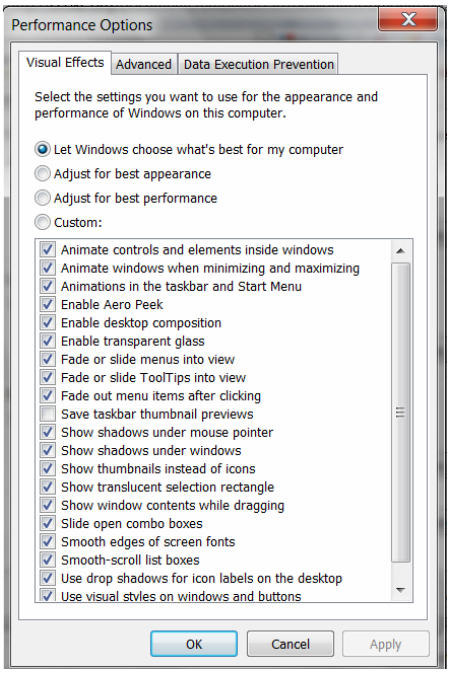

So what else can we disrupt, discuss or dispute? Most of us have had some confrontation with the people "out there" who are up to no good. Some hijack your contacts list, use your email address to send fraudulent emails bearing your email address, usually wanting money, and making enough money on the scam to keep it going, possibly forever. They use a similar technique on the telephone, claiming some kind of disaster, e.g. a car accident or some other catastrophic situation, and needing help. On the phone, the caller usually pretends to be calling at the request of - "your" daughter/son/aunt – etc. etc., and asking for money to be sent immediately to some destination the caller provides. Usually the destination is out of town, sometimes in a foreign country. Always check with the person you are supposed to know or be related to who is mentioned in the scam before forwarding any money to anyone claiming to be that person's representative. There don't appear to be any remedies for these problems, so just keep your guard up and try not to get scammed. As for the email problems, I, for one, do not keep a contact list on my webmail account. It just seems too easy for other people to hack into it from there. But even that is no guarantee of privacy.

the end of the story

Soluto

Anti-Frustration Software Improves Boot Time

by Ira Wilsker
Member, Golden Triangle PC Group, Texas;
Radio Show Host on KLVI and Columnist,
the Examiner, Beaumont, Texas
iwilsker (at) sbcglobal.net

WEBSITES:

http://www.soluto.com
http://blog.soluto.com
http://www.soluto.com/About/Media-Kit

In several past columns I have written about utilities that can speed up the computer boot process. As cluttered as it was, my old XP machine could take up to five minutes to boot; my newer Windows 7-64 machine boots in under two minutes, considering the multilayered security that is installed on it. Traditionally, the ways of speeding the boot process on a PC was to defrag the hard drive, and clean up the programs in the startup that load when the computer is first turned on. When someone tells me that his computer takes forever to boot, my typical responses are "is your hard drive defragged" (defragmented), and "how many little icons do you have on your task bar adjacent to your clock?". There are several excellent startup managers available (including Windows 'msconfig" feature), both independent utilities and components of utility suites, that can easily control what programs load at boot. Simply unchecking unwanted and unnecessary programs at boot is an accepted way of improving boot time. Likewise, there are several excellent defragmentation utilities available, including the simple one built into Windows, that can do a credible job; by defragging the hard drive, it does not have to work as hard when reading files and data, thus providing some improvement in load times.

While these two methods are well accepted and proven to speed up the boot process, a new concept in utilities was recently released that goes an extra step in controlling the boot process using a software "genome" and community experiences to determine what is loading in the computer at boot, how long each item takes to load, displays what is required or optional to load at boot, and gives the user control of what loads and when it loads during the boot process. Wanted, but low priority items, can be set to load after the computer has fully booted, and is sitting idle, thus not degrading the boot process. Unwanted items can be stopped from automatically loading, but set to load upon demand. The process may sound complex, but it is very simple with the information provided by this new utility, "Soluto Anti-Frustration Software (beta)".

Available as a free download from www.soluto.com, this software is a "beta" or pre-release version, which by definition, is not a highly refined final "release" version. My 18 month old "new" computer booted very quickly when new, but now that I have a lot of security software and other utilities loading at boot, it was taking between a minute and a half, and two minutes to boot. After I downloaded and installed Soluto, and rebooted the computer such that Soluto could measure and analyze my boot process, my first modification of my boot process improved my boot time by almost 25%! Subsequent refinements of my boot process with Soluto, and input from the "community" have helped me to shave off about another 10% of my boot time.

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After being installed, Soluto monitors what loads at each boot. During the boot process, the bottom left corner of the desktop turns up like the corner of a page and displays each item as it is loading, while displaying the elapsed time to boot the computer. Information is gathered during the boot process, and added to what has been gathered at previous boots, to provide the data that is analyzed by the program. The data that is collected is anonymously added to the Soluto PC Genome, where the community can input recommendations that will assist the user in determining what can be controlled at boot. According to Soluto, " This anonymous technical data is gathered and sent to Soluto's PC Genome, a one of a kind knowledge base containing statistical insights about PC software and hardware behavior, as well as remedies to alleviate PC usage frustrations. By putting this information into the light, the PC Genome will help consumers and vendors alike. Soluto employs another set of innovative algorithms to determine which remedies will have a positive impact on each Soluto user's unique PC system. These remedies are then shared with other relevant Soluto users." Soluto has found that by pausing when specific items load in the boot process, and reconfiguring some of the applications, boot time and overall behavior of the computer can improve dramatically. Soluto can also determine those programs that degrade computer performance, and provide the "frustrated" user with possible solutions to reduce or eliminate the source of frustration.

Soluto places a small icon on the task bar that looks somewhat like a smiley-face, and opens displaying the Soluto functions. By opening Soluto anytime after the computer has booted, the first screen called the "Boot Page" displays "Potentially Removable" items in an orange font, along with the boot time and sequence for each. By moving the cursor over any of the "Potentially Removable" items, a brief description of the software is displayed (if it is in the Genome). By moving over the "more" on the display, a recommendation may be shown, as well as a pie chart of what other users of that software have done. The user is given the option to "Pause" or "Delay" the item in subsequent boots. "Pause" prevents the item from being loaded at boot, but the program can still be loaded upon demand; "Delay" postpones the selected program from automatically loading until the computer is otherwise idle, which means that it will not slow the initial boot process. Since Soluto (beta) has just been released, the genome is still in its infancy, and does not yet contain a comprehensive database of software. The user can easily click on the pencil icon "edit" and open a Wiki which enables the user to "fill in the blanks" about an item, which will then be verified, and added to the Genome. As more users complete the Wiki, the Genome database will become more complete. As the Genome improves through this community input, all of the users can benefit by the dissemination of the information.

The grey section of the main screen "Boot Page" in Soluto displays the "Required - cannot be removed" items that load at boot, in their boot sequence and with their boot time displayed. While most of the items shown are valid Windows components, with an explanation of what each does along with its boot time, some of the items are non-Microsoft files, and lack detailed descriptions. When I first used Soluto, the components of my MagicJack VoIP service (internet based telephone service) were listed as "Required", and could not be paused or delayed; I opened the Wiki and explained what they were, and then commented that I thought that these particular components should be moved to the "Potentially removable" section where their boot process could be better managed. As the Genome grows and improves, items like this will be better sorted into the appropriate category.

The blue section on the "Boot Page" shows the items that were "Paused' or "Delayed" at boot, and how much time was saved by not loading those items. Clicking on any blue item gives the user the choice of changing the status to boot, "Pause" or "Delay", which will be implemented the next time the computer is booted.

An interesting choice on the Soluto icon is "My PC just frustrated me", which opens the Soluto window, and analyzes the running processes, and tries to determine which program is causing the slowdown. Any information found during the "frustration" analysis is anonymously added to the Genome where it will be comingled with other data and potential solutions may be determined. If a solution to the "frustration" exists, it looks like it will be displayed to the user. When I clicked on the "Frustration" menu item, Soluto identified the beta version of a new security product that I am testing as the potential source of "frustration" but could not yet show any remedy to my "frustration".

While Soluto is still in the "beta" stage of development, I found it a very useful and worthwhile utility to improve PC performance, particularly in the boot process, and for resolving potential "frustrations". Users should give Soluto Anti-Frustration Software a try. In my limited experience with it, I would give it my recommendation, as well as a rating of "two thumbs up".

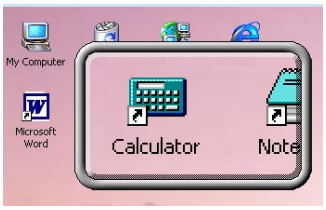
the end of the story

Virtual Magnifying Glass 3.3.2

A free, open source, screen magnifier, for Windows, Linux, FreeBSD and Mac OS X

By Jim Townsend, Managing Editor, Brevard User Group, FLA

The Bug Newsletter, May 2010 Issue
www.bugclub.org / newsletter (at) bugclub.org



Awhile ago I installed this program on my notebook computer, tried it out and forgot about it. I started to cleanup and defrag the hard drive and came across it.

So of course I had to play with it. The notebook has an LCD screen with 1280x800 resolution and some sites are hard to read with fine print, colored backgrounds and the dimming when it is on battery power.

When you click on the program to open it you have four choices to pick from, one of which is the web site. I clicked on that and read the instructions. Simple and to the point, “even a caveman could do it.” Once the program is started, you can click the mouse and it will drop to the system tray on the task bar, where you can bring it up when needed. After a reboot you will have to restart the program again, so a shortcut on the desktop would be convenient.

The program defaulted to a 3x5 inch box, which I found could easily be changed, also with different levels of magnification. You could change the width to read a line of text and three or four lines in height, then just drag the box down the page.

Did I mention it was FREE. The author asks for a donation through PayPal; if you find it useful please consider paying something.

http://www.magnifier.sourceforge.net

the end of the story

Along Memory Lane Via YouTube - Part One

By Marian Smith,
a member of the Perth PCUG, Australia Axess,
Magazine of the Perth PC Users Group, Australia,
May 2010 Issue
www.perthpcug.org.au / editor (at) perthpcug.org.au

A few months ago the unthinkable happened for those of us who enjoy downloading old music, old movies and other reminders of an almost forgotten era, and then there are some modern-day enjoyments such as some TV documentaries, if they are available from YouTube, that is. Both the previous version of YouTube Downloader and RealPlayer Download stopped working simultaneously. I'm still not aware of the details, but at least not aware of the details, but at least the new version of 'YouTube Downloader' (which was version 2.5.3 when this catastrophe occurred) has recently been updated to version 2.5.4, which works and, just a short time ago, I found an update for RealPlayer.

You will find the updated version of YouTube Downloader available from www.youtubedownload.altervista.org and the you-beaut point is that is it free. If you bought 'RealPlayer', you can also update it 'free'. RealPlayer Downloader is so simple to use. When you start to play the video-clip you are after, simply move the mouse-pointer to near the top of the main "video" display and a tab will appear, inviting you to 'Download with RealPlayer'. Just click it, and the download will happen automatically. It will be downloaded to a 'RealPlayer' folder created within your 'Videos' folder during RealPlayer's installation. When the download is finished, you can convert the file if you wish, using the included "Convert" function.

If you've been using the YouTube Downloader program through a few of its previous updates, you'll find this version somewhat different in a few aspects. When you find an item you want to download from YouTube, so that you can enjoy watching or listening to it at your leisure, be aware that, now, there is no URL conveniently displayed to the right of the main display. Instead, you get to it by right-clicking on the title displayed above the main part of the screen. A drop-down menu will appear which includes the word 'Properties' well down the list. Click on it and a panel will appear with the URL displayed in it. Select this URL by dragging your mouse-pointer along it. Then right-click on it and another list will appear with the word 'Copy' included in it. Click on that word, then:-

If you have YouTube Downloader pinned to your 'Start' menu, open it. One button displayed there will be labelled as "Download options. Here is where you can set the program to simply give you the 'best available' sound and picture-quality. Now you just point to the blank 'Download' panel and the URL will be automatically 'pasted' there. That's easy to do, isn't it?

Next, click the OK button and you will see two more messages appear - one asking you if you want to show the file's URL – click OK. The next will simply indicate where the file will be saved – very useful information when you want to find it later. Click 'Save' for that option and the download will begin.

You may find that the file-icon with the familiar small picture representing what you downloaded has the RealPlayer logo in one corner. If you have RealPlayer installed, you can play such files with no further attention needed.

the end of the story

Along Memory Lane Via YouTube - Part Two

By Marian Smith,
a member of the Perth PCUG, Australia Axess,
Magazine of the Perth PC Users Group, Australia,
May 2010 Issue
www.perthpcug.org.au / editor (at) perthpcug.org.au

If you want to use Windows Media Player to look-at or listen-to whatever it is you just downloaded, your file needs to be 'converted' to a different type. Here is what you do.

When your download has completed, close all windows except the main window for YouTube Downloader. Click the 'button' next to the word 'Convert,' and a drop-down list of file-types will appear. Choose the file-type you wish to convert to (for Windows Media Player it is WMV7 if it is a video-file you have just downloaded). Then go to where your original file was saved, so that you can drag its icon across to the 'Convert' option in YouTube Downloader, and its name will appear there automatically. Click OK.

A smaller panel will appear, inviting you to adjust picture quality and audio-volume. If the volume is loud and distorted, you can repeat this step over and over – moving the 'volume' slider down more. Each time you save a 'change' you will be asked if you want to replace the file. Click 'Yes'. Don't delete the original 'YouTube' video-file until you are satisfied with the result of the latest change you have made.

When you are finished using YouTube Downloader, remember to close the program by clicking on the 'Close' icon in the top-right corner of its panel, not the OK button. If you click on the OK button, the program will attempt to repeat what it just did.

Finally, it is an unfortunate reality that the new version of YouTube Downloader doesn't convert to .wav format although, strangely, it will convert from the .wav file-format.

There is an alternative program available (ConvertHQ), which can handle quite a number of input file-formats including extracting audio information from a video file, but even it doesn't write a .wav file. It writes mp3 files. This program is not free, but it's worth having despite this little inconvenience.

For those of you who know something of 'audio-editing,' if you have Adobe Audition 1.5, which is a virtual 'clone' of Syntrillium's 'Cool Edit Pro v2,' and can still be bought from a few online stores; you can use this program's 'Open audio from video' function to "rip" the audio information from the file and save it as a .wav file.

I hope this information helps you to download favourite music and videos from YouTube and enjoy watching and listening to those oldies-but-goodies yet again.

the end of the story

Creative Griping Makes Friends and Brings Rewards

By Gabe Goldberg, Computers and Publishing, Inc.
Slickdeals (at) gabegold.com

In a perfect world, there'd be no problems with hardware, software, or services; businesses would be fully staffed with articulate human beings ready to accommodate all requests, and every product would meet or exceed customer expectations.

But that's not how things work on planet Earth in 2010. Instead, things break quickly or are badly designed; customer service is outsourced to far-away lands; and even when they're accessible, company staff often isn't responsive.

So what to do? Nobody I know is cut out for frontier living, self-sufficiency, and subsistence farming. That means we're all making the best of living in our techno-fragile and sometimes irritating culture. So let's have at it.

First, when life's little outrages intrude, avoid the temptation to accept them as unavoidable -- and, worse, unfixable. Just as Slickdeals tips help you find bargains, a few techniques and some practice can remedy a bad situation or even turn it pleasant.

Stay Calm and Be Convincing

Complaining courteously to the right person with a specific remedy in mind can be rewarding. If a company Web site has a "Contact us" link, start there with an email or telephone connection. Be polite, identify yourself, mention how you're connected to the organization (current or potential customer, etc.), and describe your dissatisfaction.

If you're always happy after your initial dialogue with a company, you're a unique individual, and you can stop reading now!

Too frequently, however, a first complaint contact goes nowhere. That's when to escalate. Calling may work but you'll likely deal with a low-level (and low-powered) call center. So writing is better.

No matter how you're communicating -- phone, email, instant message, letter, online support chat -- keep records of contact names and what's said. These are essential for recapping, summarizing, and (especially) escalating. If it's a large company or you expect to have further contact with them, request a case or "ticket" number for tracing your request.

Use company Web sites, Google, and other online resources to identify and locate senior executives. Check Web site links such as "About us", "Press room", and "Investor relations". Write to the CEO by name and title, briefly describing, with a tone of regret, what went wrong. You certainly won't hear back in person from Ms/Mr. CEO, but most large companies have an Office of the Chairman with staff to calm down and cheer up unhappy customers. Pursuing matters to the top works. After Starbucks' Web staffers were unresponsive to a complaint, escalating to the chairman resulted in an apology and a $50 store card.

Remain courteous. Don't rant or threaten and surely don't overuse CAPITAL letters. That makes your message hard to read and look like a crude ransom note. No matter what you're told, emphasize that you're not angry at whoever you're speaking or emailing with and that you understand they're probably bound by company policies. Staying calm and cheerful sets you apart from most people and improves the odds of your getting satisfaction.

Be brief but complete. Provide enough history and detail to be clear and compelling but don't ramble or include non-essential details.

Be precise. Quote error messages, identify people involved, list event sequences so you're believable. When I complained that a Web site didn't use encryption for processing credit card information, the owner at first disagreed but when I proved my assertion, he was outraged – at his Webmaster, for botching security. He then asked what I'd intended to purchase and sent it to me free, along with other items.

Include good news. If you're a long-time customer, had a recent pleasant experience with the company, can praise a particular employee, or have ever recommended the company's products or services, say so. If whatever you're griping about was a mixed picture, begin by describing what you liked.

Let Companies Turn Problems Into Rewards

Raise issues when there's time and flexibility to remedy them. For example, when finalizing a stay at Nemacolin, a luxury Pennsylvania resort, I was unhappy to learn that two signature restaurants would be closed during our planned stay. Instead of suffering in silence or -- with difficulty -- changing our travel dates, I politely contacted the general manager to suggest that guests be informed of such restrictions when initially making reservations. He agreed, and offered to have his Five-Diamond chef prepare a fantasy meal for us including anything we requested. His only advice was, "Challenge the chef." So we did – and the world-class chef and two assistants spent three hours serving us privately, with Champagne and cocktails, on a day that the restaurant was indeed closed. And -- as arranged in advance -- one of the most memorable meals of my life cost half the normal price of dining there. So a problem identified early and solved graciously resulted in my being a huge fan of the resort, the general manager, and the chef.

Complaining, even to the top, doesn't always work. I've certainly been ignored -- received no response -- and received dismissive responses offering neither apology nor any gesture of atonement. When this happens, the final option is going public via Twitter, blogs, etc. Many companies monitor their online reputations and respond to credible complaints with remedies.

But usually, company management values and responds to customer feedback; I've established cordial relationships with executives by identifying areas needing improvement. Writing letters is easy and inexpensive enough -- and after sending a few you'll have stock phrases that make it simple -- that it's worth doing to remedy all but the smallest problems.

Five minutes and a stamp has been a small price to pay for a $50 Starbucks card, a unique luxury meal, Web site merchandise, and many hundreds of dollars worth of refunds, merchandise, and services.

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the end of the story

From The DealsGuy

by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click
Greater Orlando Computer Users Group
September 2010

I finally finished my article about creating trade shows and should have it posted on my Web site about the middle of August. Its lengthy, but you may find it interesting.

I'm not a very ambitious person so I often do things the hard way until I finally give in and see about doing, at least something, easier. One example is with my computer's cursor, which I often lose on the page, and have to find it. I always use a large arrowhead cursor, which works fairly well for me, but a printed page makes the cursor harder to follow because it changes into a thin I-beam. After fumbling for the cursor that way for a few years, I was finally prompted by a newsletter article to check in the Control Panel > Mouse, and the pointer options tab where I found a box to check to show the location of the pointer with a series of concentric circles emanating from the curser when pressing Ctrl. It was so simple to find and how stupid of me not to have looked into that long ago, and it only took me about a minute to do it. I hope you aren't that lazy. I've mentioned it to a couple of other people and they said they were unaware that you could set up something like that. I knew it, but a newsletter article finally pushed me to do it.

Sometimes a confusing experience needs a fix that can't be put off. One night I had a problem with a flash drive that I keep my DealsGuy files on. If I'm working on a DealsGuy column, I normally plug that flash drive in first and it becomes my D drive. Each evening when I'm shutting down my machine, I plug in a larger flash drive for my backup, which becomes my E drive since the DealsGuy flash drive is D. That larger flash drive "has" to be my E drive when I use it because that's where the backup is set to backup my data files.

However, one evening when beginning my session, I plugged in my DealsGuy flash drive and it became my E drive, in sprite of the fact that there was no D drive. I wondered why it did that, but all my tries, including rebooting the computer, failed to give it the drive letter I needed. I rebooted with that flash drive plugged in, and without it, then plugging it in, with no success. I even tried different USB plugs on the computer. I had used it the night before as an E drive simply to retrieve a file, but how would it get stuck on being an E drive? I had no idea, but needed help.

Maybe I needed to juggle my flash drives somehow, but I was stumped. I looked everywhere I could think of for instructions to try changing the setting of the drive's letter, and the computer's help was a lost cause for me. I knew "changing drive letters" was possible because I used it to establish my DVD drive letter when I originally set up this computer.

I called several friends who didn't have the answer, and finally called a friend in another state who I knew would have the answer if he was home. He thought my request was stupid, but finally humored me with the step-by-step procedure, and it was simple: My OS is XP and he had me go to Control Panel, Administrative Tools, Computer Management, and then Disk Management; and there was the procedure to accomplish the drive letter change. It was simple, but not to me until I was shown where to do it. My problem was solved. Thank God for my user group friends! My limited computer knowledge has come from my user group friends, and I have learned very little from "Help" (F1). On the other hand, I've seen the gurus do well with Help.

Good Help To Organize Your Desktop

A while back Hewie Poplock <**http://www.hewie.net**>, who heads the Windows SIG for Central Florida Computer Society, and also writes a monthly column called "Hewie's Favorites," demonstrated something called "Fences" and several in the group liked it. I can't adequately describe this product except to say that it offers a unique way to organize your desktop. With Fences, you can create categories that include only certain icons, making it easier to find whatever you might be looking for. You can also hide certain icons, leaving fewer choices when you are picking the icon you want to work with. The Web site says "simplify your desktop by creating shaded areas which become movable and sizable containers for your icons. Double click blank spaces on your desktop and all your fences will fade out, or come back. You can create an unlimited number of fence areas on your desktop."

Fences can be found at <**http://www.stardock.com/**> and there are videos that describe what it does. "Fences" is free for home use. A Pro version is available for $9.99 at this writing and the advantages of the Pro version are listed. I didn't pay much attention to Fences at first, but soon even the gurus started using it, so I'm passing it on to my readers. When even the consultants like a product, I think the rest of us should pay attention. There are certainly other ways to accomplish the task, but Fences may do it better. There are other products available there.

Is That Web Site Safe To Visit?

The above-mentioned users group has some interesting gurus who never fail to impress me at a monthly meeting or at a SIG meeting. At a monthly meeting, Mike Ungerman advised me that Reimage, the company I tried for improving the performance of my computer, had only a fair rating on "Web of Trust", but I had no idea what Web of Trust was. He advised me it would be a good idea to always use Web Of Trust when looking at products and services. It seems Web of Trust has a browser add-on you can download for Internet Explorer or Firefox that will give you a rating on the worthiness of many sites and their products when you access the URL.

You can also offer your own comment for a Web site or product on Web of Trust and it will be used in the rating. You might say their ratings are done by a jury of your peers. If you download and install their browser add-on, your browser will show a small circle with a color in it that rates the site you are visiting. The Web site is <**http://www.mywot.com/**>. There are a couple of sites nearly the same that

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are not good, so be sure you get that right.

I installed it and noticed that when I did a Google search for batteries, all of the URLs found had the WOT colored circles beside them. When I clicked on a URL with a red one, a window came up telling that the site did not have a very good reputation so I would enter at my own risk. Some URLs had the circle, but with a question mark, telling you it was not rated. I assume the rating depends on feedback about a site, but not necessarily for malicious code. It looks like Web Of Trust rates a site according to people's comments. Take a look and see what you think.

Hewie Poplock <**http://www.hewie.net**>, was answering a few of my questions on the use of Web of Trust and, during our conversation, he mentioned another URL of interest that will simply check the safety of a URL for you.

That one is <**http://browsingprotection.f-secure.com/swp/**>, which comes from F-Secure, who most of you are familiar with. To check the quality of a certain URL, type it in to the box where indicated and click for it to rate your requested site.
You are probably familiar with McAfee's free Site Advisor
<**http://www.siteadvisor.com/**>,
and Link Scanner, free from AVG
<**http://linkscanner.explabs.com/linkscanner/avg/**>,
which I have previously written about to warn on the safety of a URL. The F-Secure product checks a URL free, but except for the 30-day trial versions of their products, the pricing is on their site. According to their Web site, their Internet Security offers many great features so if you don't mind the price, it may offer you peace of mind.

That's it for this month. I'll have some more new product announcements on my Web site that didn't offer discounts. Meet me here again next month if your editor permits. This column is written to make user group members aware of special offers or freebies I have found or arranged, and my comments should not be interpreted to encourage, or discourage, the purchase of any products, no matter how enthused I might sound.

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click
<**bobclick at bellsouth dot net**>.
Visit my Web site at
<**http://www.dealsguy.com**>

the end of the story

From the Editor's desk

Hi PACCsters!

Must Read List!

THIS AND THAT for May 2010 by Elizabeth B. Wright.
Soluto - Anti-Frustration Software Improves Boot Time by I. Wilsker.
Sign-in to get in line to download Soluto from their web site.
Virtual Magnifying Glass 3.3.2 review by Jim Townsend.
Along Memory Lane Via YouTube - Part 1 & 2 by Marian Smith.
Creative Griping Makes Friends and Brings Rewards by G. Goldberg.
Finaly read the Deals Guy for September 2010.

Read everything!

I'll see all you at the August 15, 2010 meeting. PJK

Please change your address of PACC Web site to the following URL: http://pacc.apcug.org

(Continued from page 2)

What is System Spec ?
From the web site: "A utility to produce a specification of your system's hardware and software. With System Spec you can see, save and print a complete spec of your PC. This standalone, system information utility can also perform various windows functions. Additional advanced info includes CPU, drives, applications, display, memory, networking, internet, CD / DVD drives and more." Small enough downloads, you pick the format:
SysSpec.exe (1805kb) SysSpec.zip (734kb), Get it here:
http://www.alexnolan.net/software/sysspec.htm

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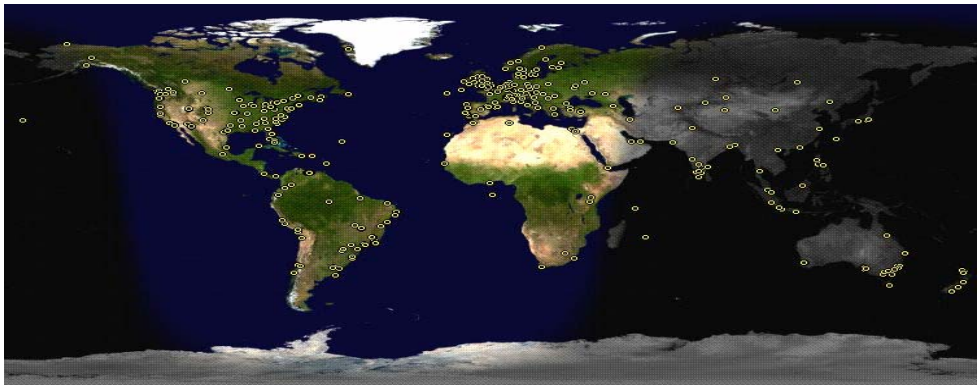
NAME	COMPUTER AREA	PHONE	TIME
Agrawala, Vishnu	Hardware	724-553-8051	3 - 6:00 pm
Cutrara, Phil	Geoworks	766-0274	
Fisher, Bill	Cobol, Word Perfect	367-8996	7 - 9:00 pm
Konecny, P.	Windows, DOS 6.2x, MS IE,, Hardware	795-6075	8 - 9:00 pm

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



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NEXT PACC MEETING
IS ON AUGUST 15, 2010

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PACC TALK

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NEXT MEETING: August 15, 2010

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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