

QBITS

Quad-Cities Computer Society
Newsletter for June 2007
Volume 25, number 5

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Wednesday
June 13, 2007
7:00 PM

Verizon Wireless
Smart Phone or PDA Phone
What is the difference?
Which one is right for you?

The Quad Cities Computer Society gratefully acknowledges

R Internet Revealed

(offering QCS members a discount)
<http://www.revealed.net>

for providing the site for our Web Page at
<http://www.qcs.org>

This Month in QBITS..

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The QCS is a member of



Monthly meetings are open to the general public.

QCS Review Social Security & The Internet

presented by Kurt Frank
www.ssa.gov
by Joe Durham

At sometime during our life we will have need of and benefit from the services provided by the Social Security Administration. It is the one area of government about which we all have opinions because it will eventually impact how we live in retirement.

Kurt Frank, a 30 year employee of the Social Security Administration came to discuss the online advances that make this retirement journey easier and more relevant in today's electronic world. Kurt mentioned that the SSA web site is one of the oldest government web portals. It has been in existence 11 years and is considered on of the top 5 secure public government web sites.

If you want to avoid long lines, busy telephone lines, using the online SSA tools will make the process more easy. There are many services available online. You can download a form to replace your lost SSA card. If you need to change your direct deposit institution, this can be done online with a password.

You can even apply for benefits online. This site will allow you to pause when filling out application forms and you need to search for the correct information. The SSA will issue you a confirmation number and you can return later to the site and complete the information.

There are several online tools that allow you to plug-in what if questions. This data may help you decide whether to take early retirement if your company offers an early retirement program.

Kurt mentioned that the SSA site has an extensive Frequently Answered Questions (FAQ) area that answers many common misconceptions and questions. In today's turbulent electronic world there is advise offered if you believe that you are a victim of identity theft.

—continued on next page—

Would You Like to receive your *QBITS* via email?

The *QBITS* can now be produced in Acrobat PDF format and sent to you email box. If you desire to have the newsletter sent to you electronically instead of by US Mail, let

Patty Lowry,
QBITS co-editor know
(563-332-8679)
heidiho@revealed.net.

The QCS will then arrange to email your next issue to you.



Moving? Send an address change to:
felspaw@sbcglobal.net

QBITS

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The Quad-Cities Computer Society or QCS is an Iowa nonprofit organization for charitable, scientific, and educational purposes primarily to educate the public concerning the advantages and disadvantages of microcomputers and to publish a newsletter for distribution to members, area libraries and educational institutions. The QCS is recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable and educational organization by the IRS.

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Following are some common web pages online :

Would you like to change your address?

<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/app6z/ICOA/coa001.jpg>

Need proof of the amount of your Social Security Check? Request a verification letter online:

<https://s044a90.ssa.gov/app6z/BEVE/main.html>

Kurt also mentioned some of the common misconceptions about Social Security:

The SSA calculates your benefits based upon the best 35 years of your employment history, not the best 5 years as some have claimed.

The SSA funds are not diverted to the general budget. Though it can be claimed that the SSA indirectly funds government expenses when it purchases government securities (as required by law) on any surplus funds. These securities help to fund other government programs. However when these securities mature the funds are returned to the SSA not the Federal government.

Make it a point to visit this vital national online resource and tell your friends about it. (www.ssa.gov). The QCS would like to thank Kurt for his fine presentation. It is information that we all can use.

QCS Raffle winners:

Emily Smith won our members present raffle of \$10. Robert Lemman won a copy of the Trend-Micro Antivirus program. Page Belinger won a copy of Photoshop 7. Glen Wells won a computer related T-shirt. Dale Arnold won a laptop bag.

VistaVexes The Windows Vista Pains'n'Gains Page

By Jan Fagerholm, Associate Editor, *PC Community*,

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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

I've been transitioning to Vista cautiously with a dual boot system with both Vista and Windows XP for several months now. This has not been as painless as I might have expected because of the changes that Microsoft made in NTFS and the System Restore feature. Before delving into diatribe, though, I need to explain how this system is set up.

I use conventional IT practices for installing the OS, programs, and data on separate partitions on the hard drive. This is useful for preserving data in case the OS fails. (That's "when", not "if" in the case of Windows.) So, installing another operating system is a simple matter of creating a new partition for it, then installing the OS on that partition. You can boot into either OS at startup, then access the data, which is on its own partition. (Incidentally, this also makes backup chores easier, as you can simply back up the partition with the data on it, which is what you really want to keep.)

The problem comes when running Vista and XP on the same drive, because of the changes Microsoft made in System Restore. They are not compatible between Vista and XP. If you have System Restore set to monitor all partitions (the default), XP will wipe out Vista's restore points when it starts, and Vista will wipe out XP's restore points when it starts, so if you have a problem with, oh, let's say Vista, which you will because it's barely out of beta, then you boot into XP to recover something, guess what! — you cannot restore any of your drives in XP because Vista wiped out all of XP's restore points! (Ask me how I know . . .)

There is a solution to this, though it does require you to commit to

one system or the other. In my case, I took the plunge and gave System Restore responsibilities to Vista by turning off System Restore in Windows XP. This way I can still use both XP and Vista without losing the much-needed functionality of System Restore. I am committed to moving to Vista on the Windows side (though I spend most of my constructive time in the *nix systems of Linux and OS X.) At least this way I am able to use System Restore where I need it most, namely in Vista.

Looking beyond the gloom and doom view, there have been a couple of nice additions to Vista since it came out. I'm running Vista Ultimate, which offers something called "Windows Ultimate Extras". These are some fluff pieces offered from time to time that are similar to what the old Plus Pack used to offer. In the case of Windows Ultimate Extras, these additions are offered as downloads and you receive notification of them through Windows Update, where you can download them. A recent addition is a wallpaper feature called Dream-Scenes, which provides animated displays as wallpaper on the desktop. Microsoft has turned some thoughtful people loose on this concept, so while my first reaction to things that wiggle on the desktop is that it is just distracting, there are some very pleasant and gentle animations that I find pleasing without being disquieting. There are a couple of nature scenes that I like to activate while I am writing, as the effect is similar to gazing out the window when you sit back seeking inspiration.

The last month has seen two of my must-have applications come out with Vista compatible versions; Corel Graphics Suite X3 and AB-BYY FineReader Pro (OCR program). I'm still recommending that you wait for Vista SP-1 before upgrading from XP, unless you are adventurous enough to try some

alternatives to what you may be using now.

So this month I found out that dual booting XP with Vista will trash my system recovery options while soothing my jangled nerves with moving wallpaper. What next?

McAfee SiteAdvisor

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

Anyone who has been on the Internet for a while realizes that even websites that look benign can generate viruses, adware, spyware, spam, and scams. Until now, it was difficult to determine which websites to avoid. Now, however, safe surfing just got easier. Now there is a wonderful free program that warns you about dangerous websites.

The McAfee SiteAdvisor is a small piece of software that works with your Internet Browser (either Internet Explorer or Firefox). It tells you in an easy graphical format which websites are safe and which harbor spyware, viruses, excessive pop-ups, or online scams.

McAfee has a system of automated spiders that patrol the Web constantly checking out websites. They assess the safety of each website including how much spam is generated from signing up for information at that site and how much spyware, adware, and other nasties might be attached to downloads from that site. The SiteAdvisor will also alert you to sites with excessive pop-ups and those that are possible phishing sites. Besides the automated testing, McAfee has a team of individuals who assess the sites. They use a detailed analysis as well as feedback from individual users.

To use the SiteAdvisor, you sim

ply download the free program. The program is very small, so it downloads and installs quickly and it doesn't slow down your Web surfing.

After installation, a small SiteAdvisor rectangle will appear either on the top (Internet Explorer) or the bottom (Firefox) of the screen. When you visit a site that SiteAdvisor considers safe the rectangle turns green. Sites that have serious security problems will turn the rectangle red. A yellow rectangle means that the website may have some problems or issues. You can click on the SiteAdvisor symbol to get more information about the website that you are visiting and why it is considered safe or unsafe.

This information is invaluable when surfing the Web. With SiteAdvisor installed you don't have to be fearful that signing up for more information or a newsletter will set you up for spam. You don't have to worry that downloading software will install spyware. In fact, SiteAdvisor takes much of the fear out of investigating and trying new things on the Internet.

Another great feature of the SiteAdvisor program is that when you do a search on Google, Yahoo! or MSN, SiteAdvisor's safety ratings appear as a red, green, or yellow circle next to the search results. You can easily see if a website is safe before you visit!! What a pleasant and useful service. If you want more information before you click on the search engine listing, just hover your mouse over the SiteAdvisor icon and a window will pop-up giving your details on the site's ratings.

Everything that I just described about the SiteAdvisor is available in the free version. McAfee also offers a Plus version that is available for \$19.99 per single user or as a 3-user family pack for \$39.99. The Plus version offers even more peace of mind by alerting you to dangerous links in email and instant

—continued on next page—

messaging programs. The Plus version also has a password protected mode that can actively protect your computer against dangerous websites. This version is perfect for anyone who wants a little extra protection. It is also great for shared computers and computers that children or grandchildren use. Click here to download the SiteAdvisor.

Be Aware!...(Humor)

There is a dangerous virus being passed around electronically, orally, and by hand. This virus is called Worm-Overload-Recreational-Killer (WORK).

If you receive WORK from any of your colleagues, your boss, or anyone else via any means DO NOT TOUCH IT. This virus will wipe out your private life completely.

If you should come into contact with WORK put your jacket on and take two good friends to the nearest grocery store. Purchase the antidote known as Work-Isolating-Neutralizer-Extract (WINE) or Bothersome-Employer-Elimination-Rebooter (BEER). Take the antidote repeatedly until WORK has been completely eliminated from your system.

But do not stress there is a vaccine available... It is called RETIREMENT!!!

Secure Your Flash Drive Cap

By Fran Damratowski.
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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

Have you ever misplaced your flash drive cap? No need to ever do that again. Secure it with a button. You will need

- a shirt button,
- some heavy thread such as carpet thread,
- double sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam,
- double sided sticky tape, and
- some colorless nail polish.

1. Run the thread diagonally through two of the buttonholes and secure with a square knot.

2. Place the knot on the top of the button not on the flat bottom of the button.

3. Cut the thread long enough to secure it with enough play to remove the cap.

4. Cut a small piece of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam about the size of the button.

5. Remove the backing from one side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam and place a small piece of the double-sided sticky tape on the sticky side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam. (The double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam does not hold well without the sticky tape. The tape alone does not hold well either.)

6. Securely attach the flat side of the button to the sticky tape.

7. Trim the excess tape and foam using an x-acto knife.

8. Remove the backing from the other side of the double-sided self-sticking adhesive mounting foam and place another piece of double sided sticky tape on the foam.

9. Securely attach the button foam and tape to the flash drive cap.

10. Secure the other end of the thread to the flash drive or lanyard.

11. Leave enough play to easily remove the cap, but not get tangled.

12. Use the colorless nail polish to secure the knots so they don't become undone.

13. After the nail polish dries trim the thread.

OR

You could go to your local photo shop and buy a \$2+ button size lens cap keeper (or cap retainer) and modify it as needed. Most of them appear to come with elastic bands that are placed around the lens barrel as opposed to a leash that can be attached to another part of the camera.

Cyber News!

by Gary Stanley
gary.stanley.net/cyber_news.htm

Did you ever wonder what would happen if you drove your car behind a 747 on the runway? Oh I'm sure you have never given that a thought, but here's what would happen if you tried.
<http://www.flixy.com/747-vs-car.htm>

Most people love animals, and they can get themselves into some funny situations now and then. Here's a site that will show you animal pictures that will make you smile, some might even make you laugh! www.funnyanimalz.com

The most valuable computer keyboard command that I have ever used is undo. There's hardly a day when I don't use this several times. Make a mistake? Make it go away by holding down the CTRL key and tapping the Z key. That will always undo the last thing that you did in almost any program. It even works in email.

The most valuable financial tip that I've ever heard. Most Americans are deeply in debt, and being in that situation is no fun. Here's a short video <http://www.flixy.com/financial-advice.htm> that will give you a revealing look at how not to get into that trap!

I've mentioned that my favorite anti-virus program is AVG. Why? Because it works great, updates by

itself, is not a resource hog, and it's free! One thing that I don't think is necessary though is a daily virus scan, and you can stop that by doing the following. Double click the AVG icon down by the clock. Right click on "Scheduler" then "Scheduled Tasks." Double click "Test plan in basic mode" and take the check mark away from "Periodically start scheduled anti-virus test." Click OK, close, then close AVG. Problem solved.

Remember, no matter what program you are currently using, the F1 key will instantly bring you a help menu.

I have heard complaints from some of you that you're not in love with IE 7.0. If that's the case there is an alternative, and a good one at that. Give Firefox a test drive, and if you like it better, which you probably will, use it as your default browser. Note: You don't have to uninstall Internet Explorer to use Firefox. I've been using it for months and love it. Here's the place to learn all about it and for your free download

<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/>.

Create your own news story and have it published in any newspaper. Create a short story about you or a friend and make the story look like it was published in the newspaper of your choice. It's simple and fun. Type in the name of the newspaper, the date, the headline you want and a short story, then click on the Generate button. Now you can send people to that web page, or copy it and send it in an email. Here's the link. <http://www.getclippings.com/>

Photo tip of the month: I recently attended another photo seminar taught by a representative from Nikon. He told us how we could look our best when someone takes our picture. Once you practice this you'll have the right technique for the rest of your life.

First, understand that every human being has one eye and ear that is slightly higher than the other. Stand directly in front of a mirror and de-

termine which side is higher for you. That will be your good side. Now when your picture is taken, stand with your good side at 90 degrees to the camera. Turn your shoulders about half way toward the camera and your head all the way. Fold your hands in front of you, suck in your stomach, and smile. Of course you may change the expression on your face to fit the mood that you wish to portray.

I found the coolest site, featuring picture postcards from the past. Click on your state, then your county and you will find photos that will take you down memory lane! <http://www.rootsweb.com/~usgenweb/special/ppcs/ppcs.html>

Soft Hardware from Otterbox!

by Judy Lococo, Program Director, Kentucky-Indiana PCUG, Kentucky
www.kipcug.org
[programs\(at\)kipcug.org](mailto:programs(at)kipcug.org)
Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

Fort Collins, CO is a charming college town. I know, I've been there, done that and have the t-shirt. You would not expect to find a lot of businesses prospering in this relatively quiet town that wasn't geared towards students and faculty. However, I have discovered one that is worth further investigation, as they have some products that seem to be extremely useful in today's global mentality.

After having been awarded a new 8700 Blackberry by Ziff Davis for participating in a webinar, I finally found the time to switch the cell phone to this device, and synchronize it with all the contacts, calendar appointments, tasks, etc. that has glommed onto me from years of Outlook usage. But the holster that came with it seemed to

always dial home, whether I needed to or not. It seems that unless the keypad was locked when inserted into the holster, some of the keys along the side of the keypad were depressed, thus ET was phoning home without realizing.

Enter Otterbox, from Fort Collins (<http://www.otterbox.com>)! They have cases for a lot of different toys we now consider indispensable. They have products for the Blackberry, for the Treo, for the iPod Nano, for laptops, etc., so it would behoove all y'all (I had to do that at least once.) to see what is available for your gadget du jour. Not only do these cases stop the phone home syndrome (poetic, isn't it?), but they are also shock-resistant, water-resistant, dustresistant, scratch-resistant, and offer protection against extreme elements. The most significant discovery I have found is that you can use all the Blackberry features while it's fully encased in the Otterbox, such as the track wheel, the keypad, the escape key, etc! And when you need to recharge the unit itself, a small plug removes from the side of the case to allow access, so you don't even have to remove the case for this veritably essential chore.

The company is very user-friendly, and seems to be perfectly accommodating, to ensure that you are satisfied with their products. The black and gray color isn't the most flamboyant scheme, but it will go with almost any wardrobe choices you have, and doesn't call attention to what you are doing. The molded rubber and o-ring seals are a bit on the bulky side, but really do provide an unbelievable amount of protection, and transform a fairly delicate instrument into something a lot more usable and carefree. The Blackberry itself is not skinny, so just a little more girth doesn't deter me from believing this is an extremely essential accessory, especially for less than \$130.00 US I am one of those people who

—continued on next page—

Officers 2007 - 2008

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think hardware is boring, as all it does is just sit there & blindly obey. But these superb soft hardware enhancements, that actually do what they purport to, without a lot of glitz and hype, aren't at all boring. They are practically a necessity. Now, if they could only find a way to protect you from leaving it on the seat in the taxi!



Be sure to check your mailing label for your member expiration date.

Cash On The \$\$ Barrel Head! \$\$



Here is an opportunity for QCS members to obtain a chance for some cash. Each month, the entire QCS membership automatically is enrolled in a monthly raffle. **All you have to do is to attend.** At each main meeting, a member's name will be drawn. The initial meeting amount is \$10. If no name is drawn, \$5 will be added each month up to a total of \$200.

How To Get Yahoo Anti-Spy Scanner Back

1. On the Yahoo Toolbar, right click the "Settings" button.
2. Select "Uninstall" from the pop-down menu.
3. Go to Windows Control Panel.
4. Click on "Add/Remove Programs"
5. Highlight "Norton Anti-Spy"
6. Click on "Change/Remove" and select "Remove"
7. Install Yahoo Toolbar again.
8. Voila! Yahoo Anti-Spy Scanner is back in place on the Toolbar.

SIGS on Vacation

Summer is upon us and here is the following summer cancellations of SIGs.

Web Design had its last meeting in May.

Digital SIG will be on vacation in July, August, and September. It will resume in October.

The Internet SIG will be off in July and will meeting again in August.

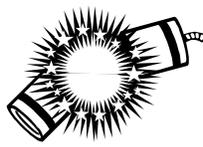
This is a list of changes at the time of printing QBits. Be sure and check the web site www.qcs.org for last minute changes.

QCS Recycles!

Save your empty ink jet and laser toner cartridges and bring them to the General Meetings. The QCS will receive a refund check for returned cartridges. Another plus, this will keep them out of landfills

The QCS is also recycling your old CD's. Please bring your extra CD's to the Main Meeting. Thanks.!

QCS Meeting Dates

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri	Sat
	June 2007				1 Jun	2 Jun
3 Jun	4 Jun 7:00 PM Microsoft Publisher SIG Diana Wolf 309-797-5413 theqcs.sec@mchsi.com	5 Jun	6 Jun 7:00 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-792-9224 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	7 Jun	8 Jun	9 Jun
			Deadline for QBITS articles			
10 Jun	11 Jun	12 Jun 7:00 PM Internet SIG Ted Huberts 309-792-9470 slowhand54@sbcglobal.net	13 Jun 5:45 PM Beginners SIG * 7:00 PM Verizon Wireless	14 Jun	15 Jun	16 Jun
17 Jun	18 Jun 7:00 PM Genealogy SIG Len Stevens 563-359-9672 julylenstevens@msn.com	19 Jun	20 Jun 7:00 PM Digital Media SIG Norm Dunlap 309-798-2304 normdun@revealed.net	21 Jun	22 Jun	23 Jun
24 Jun	25 Jun 7:00 PM Windows SIG Larry Stone 309-787-5574 lstone521@mchsi.com	26 Jun	27 Jun 7:00 PM Networking SIG Judi McDowell 309-792-9224 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	28 Jun	29 Jun	30 Jun
1 Jul	2 Jul 7:00 PM Microsoft Publisher SIG Diana Wolf 309-797-5413 theqcs.sec@mchsi.com	3 Jul	4 Jul	5 Jul	6 Jul	7 Jul
		July 2007			Deadline for QBITS articles	

***Beginner's SIG meets at Tri-City Jewish Center
before the QCS program**

**ALL QCS MEETINGS NOW HELD AT
TRI-CITY JEWISH CENTER
2715 30TH
ROCK ISLAND, IL 61201
ALWAYS CALL AS INDICATED ON THE
CALENDAR
TO VERIFY MEETING TIME, LOCATION, AND
TOPIC INFORMATION
ALL QCS MEETING FACILITIES ARE
HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE.**

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Moving? Send an
address change to:
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QCS Home Page URL
<http://www.qcs.org>

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Address: _____
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Referred by: _____

Membership Level

		New	Renewal
Full Time Student	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Individual	\$30	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	\$40	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Quad-Cities Computer Society
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Rock Island IL 61201

Wednesday
June 13, 2007
7:00 PM
SmartPhones
with
Verizon Wireless