

QBITS

Quad-Cities Computer Society
Newsletter for September 2008
Volume 26, number 8

www.qcs.org

Wednesday
September 10, 2008
7:00 PM

Smart Phones

by Brett Jones
Best Buy Mobile Manager



<http://mwug.apcug.org>
September 19, 20, and 21, 2008.
Pre-register today online!
Worshops, Vendor Presentations!
Door Prizes!

This Month in *QBITS*..

| | |
|---|----|
| SIG Notice..... | 2 |
| APCUG Blog..... | 3 |
| Cybernews..... | 3 |
| iPhone for Boomers..... | 4 |
| The New, the Best AND the Worst..... | 5 |
| System Mechanic 8-A PC "Swiss Army Knife"..... | 7 |
| Windows XP Expires..... | 8 |
| Need a Sticky Note? Put is on Your Computer..... | 8 |
| Saving Pictures that show on your compute screen..... | 8 |
| Genealogy SIG News..... | 10 |
| Members Raffle..... | 10 |
| QCS Meetings Dates May 2008..... | 11 |

QCS Review

The Blogging World

www.thecreativitypipeline.com

presented by
Rachel (Heimberger) Piper
Debra Verber
Jason Verber
by Joe Durham

Blog is short for weblog which is an Internet site that posts commentary, and comments usually in reverse chronological order. A simple concept. Rachel Piper and her friends proceeded to describe the powerful, fun and many features of this Internet communication. Blogging is the social networking tool that everyone can use. Rachel described the various types of blogs and how we can use them to broaden our enjoyment and use of the internet. Blog types conform to the entire range of human communication: there are personal blogs, business blogs, political blogs, military blogs, private blogs, sports blogs, How to blogs.

People can share hobbies on the Internet. She described a blog for scrap booking. By setting up an Internet space of this type, one can have a central site for photos and commentary and history. Friends and family that visit the blog can view the collected memories in one place without the need to download all of the photos and multimedia that are created. Additionally the chronological record of comments to the scrap booking blog create a family history that people can reference any time, from any place.

Another useful blog example: School blogs. Through it, teachers can keep students, and parents up to date as the school year passes. Comments can offer an immediate interaction about those dates, decisions and plans.

—continued on next page—

The QCS is a member of



**Monthly meetings are open to the
general public.**

Views and opinions expressed by presenters
do not necessarily reflect those
of the Quad Cities Computer Society

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

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

Patty Lowry,
QBITS co-editor
(563-332-8679)

heidiho@soloconnect.com

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



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

QBITS

Published monthly by the
Quad Cities Computer Society
Tri-City Jewish Center
2715 30th Street
Rock Island IL 61201
web page • <http://www.qcs.org>

Co-editors
Joe Durham
joseph85_us@yahoo.com
Patty Lowry
heidiho@soloconnect.com

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.

COPYRIGHT: *QBITS* copyright © 2008 by the QCS. All rights reserved. Subscriptions are included in cost of membership. Reproduction of any material herein is expressly prohibited unless prior written permission is given by the QCS. Permission to reprint material contained herein is granted to other nonprofit personal computer groups provided the full attribution of the author, publication, title and date are given, except that articles with Copyright notice in the header indicates article may only be reproduced with the express written permission of the author (or other indicated copyright holder). Brand or product names are trademarks™ of their respective carriers. As a typographic convention we do not so identify as such.

Rachel noted that a business blog she helped to create was quite useful in driving customers to a business. They were able to offer direct customer service through the comments posted at the business blog site. The business created coupons and sales info that was readily available to the bloggers that frequented that space.

Before the Internet, and before computers if we had a problem we asked friends, looked for information in books, libraries and magazines. Now there are How To blogs for every concept and problem in the human imagination. These Internet bulletin boards make computing immediately interactive and useful. And to bring things full circle the blogging world can now be accessed and used on cell phones. During the presentation Jason Verber updated Rachel's blog and a text message was sent to Debra Verber's cell phone immediately.

As in all things of the Internet, be aware that a blog is a public medium everywhere, everyplace. So if you make a bad comment about someone, or expound on a pet peeve, people will be able to search those terms and find them on the Internet. Common sense, as in all things can make the blogging experience joyful, useful and helpful for all.

So how does one enter this brave new world? Easily. Rachel, and her friends Debra and Jason Verber described three ways to enter the blogging world: Blogspot, Typepad and Wordpress. Debra talked about Blogspot which works well for beginners and is free. To create a blog in Blogspot one needs first to create a gmail account. At the top of the page of your Gmail account click the **more** option. Scroll down to **even more** and click that. In the next page click the Google tool:

The September meetings of Microsoft Office and Digital Media SIG are Canceled.

Blogger. It will ask for your Google password at the top of the screen. The next screen will ask for a Display name to be associated with your blog. Once that is created another screen will appear that will ask for a blog title and a blog address (which Google will check for availability). Click continue, and a template option appears, pick one and click continue. Your blog is now established, click Start Blogging to begin. Your venture in blogging has begun.

Blogspot is a free blogging engine sponsored by Google. The blog post window is a simple word processing area with standard text formatting tools and spell check options which are useful. Once you have created some commentary, you can also learn to do extra things like: Posting a poll, create a question of the day. Add multimedia content, and Internet links that are germane to your interests and opinions.

As a general rule of thumb, the blog creator has control over the comments made to the blog if they so choose. You set the blog to allow you to preview the comments before they are accepted for public viewing. If offensive content is posted that you do not like, it can be deleted. The main focus and purpose of blogging is to create a commentary that will cause people to respond and interact with your site. As a result Debra said, you will often find new friends, new ideas.

Rachel touched on the features of TypePad, another common blogging center. This one follows the same concept of **Blogspot.com**, but it is a paid site. So this is geared to more advance bloggers, and has more features and options. If you know html code or know of someone that can create it for you, Typepad will allow you to post a more creative and interactive blog. By doing so, the Typepad blog can look more like a webpage than a blog if you so prefer it to have that appearance.

There are more options to add photo albums, podcasts, and Internet links. TypePad has some antispam controls (the need for a key entered to post a comment for example). You can monitor your blog site traffic. Typepad offers three paid options \$4.95 / \$8.95 / \$14.95 which are scaled by size of storage space and bandwidth size.

And finally Rachel and Debra offered their views of the more versatile blog engine: Wordpress, for the advanced blogger. In this instance you first purchase a domain name which is commonly purchased from a place like **godaddy.com**. Once you have completed this step you need to purchase web space for your blog to reside and then have Wordpress point to that location. This site is less user friendly, but as a result it allows one more freedom if you know how to code the site adequately.

All three presenters noted that the customer service and help areas in any of these blogger areas is very good. There are people on the Internet ready to turn your blogging experience into a fun journey. Rachel noted that patience is the byword as you start your blog. Don't be surprised if activity on your blog site is low. It takes time for people to find it, offer their commentary and growing interaction with it. Like most Internet features a blog requires that you keep things novel and fresh to bring people to your site.

Google Reader is the easier method to find and subscribe to blogs of interest to you. The Google Reader automatically sends to you new posts that occur on the blogs that you have selected. As you read the new posts there is a link contained in the message that always allow you to access the original blog page directly if you wish.

Blogspot, TypePad, and Wordpress are full featured blog options. Twitter, Rachel, explained is a blog short hand. The comments on Twit-

ter can only be 140 characters in length, so the commentary and their replies must be concise and to the point. Twitter is a good blog vehicle for cell phone because of its text limitations.

Can a Blog fit into your Internet profile? Sure. Give it a try, expand your Internet horizons and interests. Add your voice to the Internet community. This author followed the steps and set up a blog within minutes. It is easy to do and try our **ndu-puppylinux.blogspot.com**. If you don't like the experience, Rachel said that these blog engines give you the option of deleting the blog. Visit the site **www.thecreativitypipeline.com** which Rachel, Debra and Jason created for this presentation that will be up for a month or so. It is a very useful guide to the blogging world.

The QCS would like to thank Rachel, Debra and Jason for their fine presentation and pulling back the curtain on this new Internet phenomenon. Marilyn Mix, Ruth Thompson, and Len Stevens won raffle prizes at the conclusion of our meeting.

APCUG Blog

In our own backyard, there is an example of a blog developed by WordPress: **blog.apcug.org**. This blog is presented by APCUG of which the QCS is a member. Note the features on it that Rachel and her friends described. On the sidebar, convenient blog statements: archives, recent posts, sponsor links, themes, a calendar for reference. Likewise in your own blog you can create and display categories and reference information related to your interests and audience.

CyberNews

by Gary Stanley
gary@stanley.net

Welcome to the August 2008 Edition of Cyber News, an ad free,

spam free online magazine emanating from Stanley's Studio in Phoenix, Arizona. In Cyber News we'll try to pass along some useful tips and information about your computer, the Internet, computer products, digital photography, other related topics, and some stuff that's not related at all.

°One of the most common things I see when troubleshooting computers is a raft of browser toolbars. When I ask a client why they are using them they reply "I don't know how they got there." I don't believe in toolbars, period. They take up valuable space and some of them cause problems. But how do they get into your browser in the first place? Most of the time they are "sneaked" in with free software downloads. For example Adobe's Reader installs Google's toolbar, Sun's Java applet installs Yahoo's toolbar and so will my best friend CCleaner **www.ccleaner.com/** unless you carefully watch the install process. During the installation you will see a box that can be unchecked so you don't get all the extra junk. If you have any toolbar now and want to get rid of it (I sure would), click Start, Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs, find the toolbar, highlight it and click the remove button. Removing some programs from your computer may require you to reboot. Just remember, the more "gingerbread" you load into your computer the more likely you are to have problems.

°To make your computer run as fast as possible, remove the junk and follow the steps outlined here **gary.stanley.net/maintenance.htm**

°What happens when something goes wrong with your computer? There are several things you can do, one of which is to simply turn off your machine, wait 20 seconds, then turn it back on. Many times this will solve the problem. If a program freezes up, do a CTRL-ALT-DELETE. In the window that appears you will see all programs that are currently running and the guilty

—continued on next page—

culprit will say "Not Responding." Highlight it and click on the "End Task" button. This will close the frozen application and you're back in business. Another simple procedure for problems is to use "System Restore." Don't be confused between this and the restore CD or CDs that came with your computer. That is a last resort. Use the built in System Restore on your computer to fix a problem that has occurred. You can review the procedure here www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/helpandsupport/learnmore/systemrestore.mspx.

°A reminder for those of you who use Outlook Express as your email client. To clean up dead space in Outlook Express after you have cleaned up your Inbox, Deleted Items box, and Sent Items box, click on File, Folder, and Compact all Folders. After you have done this you will notice a bunch of bak files in your Recycle Bin which are safe to delete.

°Another reminder about Email. I've mentioned many times how wonderful the Internet is. It has shrunk the world by offering communication, education, shopping, news and entertainment. But, there are perils. One of them is email messages asking for personal information. Don't be gullible! Use common sense. A good method is just don't open mail from strangers. One good way to stop unwanted mail in Outlook Express is to highlight the message in your inbox, click on Message at the top of the page then click on "Block Sender." The next time that person tries to bother you it will automatically end up in your deleted items box.

°Every human being on earth has talent. The problem with most of us is that we don't develop our God given gifts. I'd like to introduce you to a 12 year girl named Faryl Smith who appeared on "Britain's Got Talent."

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCx1vrpC9P0. She'll take your breath away as she sings Ava Maria!

°Actually you could spend a lot of time clicking on various acts on Britain's Got Talent. If Faryl wasn't good enough, how about watching Madonna Decena from the Phillipines. Wow!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLRBx3YBWDk&feature=related

This video is a little longer but you will be fascinated by talents of Keith Barry! www.flixy.com/keith-barry-magic-tricks.htm

°Want to cut your fuel costs by 60 percent, use water as fuel, receive a free \$1000 gas card, or lock down the price of gas to \$2.49 a gallon?

You can find these offers on the Web, but experts say most are bogus, designed to collect personal information, to get you to sign up for services you may not want, or to sell you pricey gizmos that won't save you a dime in fuel costs. Details from PC World

www.pcworld.com/article/148710/gas_crisis_fuels_dubious_online_offers.html.

°In today's world of technology millions of cell phones are in use. What happens though if you lose yours? Will the finder have access to valuable information on your phone? Find out how you can help protect yourself from unauthorized eyes. More from CNN

www.cnn.com/video/#/video/tech/2008/07/26/data.doctor.smartphone.cnn.

°Photo Tip: Remember to resize your photos before sending them in email. So many people take their pictures and send them right out of the camera which makes viewing them at the other end almost impossible without having to import them into a photo editor. A reasonable size for emailing is 640x480. Every photo program, even the most primitive, will have a resize button.

°Speaking of pictures, you might like to browse my personal Photo Web Site. We spent most of July at the Rocky Mountain National Park so the last few pictures are new in the "National Parks Gallery." We met a lot of interesting people as

seen in the "People & Portraits Galleries." Shooting wildlife is always a challenge and even though I didn't get a shot of a mountain lion or a big horn sheep, I did get a deer, a moose, and a great shot of a bull Elk. Those are the last three pictures in "Animals & Birds Gallery." Even though we were on the road with our RV for a month doesn't mean that I didn't have some technology along for the ride. That's the last picture in the "Camping & ATVing Gallery."

Takin' it easy in Arizona's heat! As much as we love Phoenix, it was tough to come home to a temperature of 111 degrees, especially after enjoying the mild temps in Colorado for the month. In any case we are having fun this summer and hope you are too. "Making memories" is the name of the game!

Lots of videos this month. I have really only two fears in life. Heights and snakes. They say to overcome your fears, stand up to them. I've tried to do that in the last couple of years by using my love for photography. I've stood in dangerous high places and at times jeopardized my safety by getting too close to wild animals to "get the shot." Here's an example.

There's nothing like the feeling of Patriotism. Watch this video www.nfl.com/videos?videoId=09000d5d80924c91 to "get that feeling" of what thousands experience on an NFL weekend.

Until next time my friends.....

iPhone for Boomers

by Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
www.compukiss.com
[sandy\(at\)compukiss.com](mailto:sandy(at)compukiss.com)

According to the data from the International Communications Union, the world now has more than 2 billion cell phone or mobile phone subscribers. While some business and high tech users are using their phones for email and the

Internet, I venture to say that most of those 2 billion users are only using their cell phones to make calls and to text message. In fact, I am sure that many users don't know how to do much more than that, even though their phones are capable of much more.

The reason is that up until now, cell phones with their tiny buttons and complex menu systems have frustrated many average users. The recent introduction of a fast, stable, and more affordable iPhone is poised to change all of that.

While the twenty- and thirty-something's are flocking to the iPhone as the latest status symbol, the forty-, fifty-, and sixty-something's are acquiring iPhones because there are no tiny buttons and no complex menu systems. In fact, the large bright touch screen, big icons, and the on-screen keyboard make the iPhone extremely easy to use.

One button brings up the Home screen of icons. The screen is clear and uncluttered. The icons are all easily identifiable by their picture, so the iPhone experience is very visual. The four most used icons are placed on the bottom of the screen. By default, they are Phone, Mail, Safari (the Internet browser), and iPod. You can put whatever you use the most on the bottom row. You can also rearrange all the icons to suit your taste.

The way you rearrange the icons is indicative of the ease of use of the entire gadget. To rearrange the icons on the Home screen, you simply press any icon and hold your finger down until all the icons start to wiggle. Then you drag the icons from place to place. To put an icon on the second page of the Home screen, you simply drag it off the screen to the right. The second page will appear with the icon on it. To return to the first screen of the Home page, just drag your finger across the screen in a leftward motion. To stop the wiggling and confirm that you are done moving the icons around, you simply touch the Home button

You can't miss it because while other cell phones seem to have a million buttons, the Home button is the only button on the surface of the iPhone.

As you can tell by this explanation, the iPhone is also very tactile. You can move things around the screen with your finger. To make a web page larger, you simply flick your two fingers apart on the screen. Bring your fingers together and the webpage gets smaller. Double-tap the screen and the page fits the screen. To take a picture, you press the camera icon, aim the camera on the back of the iPhone and press the icon on the bottom of the screen. It is so intuitive that it is actually fun!

On top of that Apple has added a Apps store to its iTunes Online Store. They have over 500 applications that you can add to your iPhone. Many are free. Others cost \$1. Most of those which you have to pay for are under \$10. Some of these applications are just for fun, some are for productivity. For instance, if you download an application called Recorder, you can turn your iPhone into an voice recorder. But you can also choose an application that turns it into an a light saber or one that lets you pop bubbles on the screen.

At \$199 for the 8GB model, the iPhone has a lot to like. To use it you must subscribe to AT&T for two years. That is not unusual for a cell phone service contract. You also have to have an additional data plan that costs \$30 a month. While this might seem costly, you get a lot for your money.

Not only is the iPhone intuitive, visual, and tactile, but it has access to the Internet and lets you send and receive email. It is like having a mini-computer in your hand. For many it will replace the laptop they drag along when traveling.

The iPhone is also a full-blown iPod that plays both music and video. Since it has its own speaker, you don't even need earbuds or headphones as you do with most

other music players. Oh, and did I mention, it has the best audio quality of any cell phone I've ever used. Am I hooked? You bet I am.....

And the same thing will happen to many others who try the iPhone. It is poised to change the way we use cell phones.

This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

The New, the Best, AND the Worst

July - August 2008

Collected BY Pim Borman,
Webmaster, SW Indiana PC
Users Group

<http://swipcug.apcug.org>
[swipcug\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:swipcug(at)gmail.com)

Picasa web album

In June I took a brief vacation with son mike and cocker spaniel bonnie, touring scenic central West Virginia. We visited the stark rock outcropping known as Seneca rocks, admired the amazing 110-meter steerable radio telescope at the green bank national radio astronomy observatory, and found carnivorous plants in their natural habitat in the cranberry glades botanic area. Together we took over 400 pictures along the way that we culled down to 60-some upon our return. It is often said that the secret of great photographers is that they take hundreds of pictures but save only the one or two best ones. Nobody ever mentions how hard it is to pick out those few winners!

I decided to try and upload the best pictures to one of the online free photo albums. I was already somewhat familiar with Flick'r, but I decided to try the Google-Picasa web album instead. Picasa is an excellent simple photo editor and it gives direct access to the online web album. The album allows 1gb of storage, enough for some 4000 pictures, and you can get even more

—continued on next page—

than that for a small fee.

Since I already had a Google email account, setting up the web album was easy, using the same user name and password. On the web site you can set up separate albums (folders, really) to store pictures in separate categories. I created a new album for my vacation pictures and prepared to upload them. After some trial and error I found it easiest to first assemble the captioned pictures in a Picasa album on my pc and then to upload them all at once to the web album. Once the pictures are uploaded you can add more or delete mistakes, move them around into the desired order, and add or change captions. By default, the photos are automatically converted to the optimum size for display on a computer screen, but there are options for larger (up to 20mb) or smaller file sizes.

Once the album has been installed it is ready to be shared with the rest of the world. You may choose to make your photos public, available to anyone, or keep them private, only accessible to those you share the URL with. The view album page shows large thumbnails of the photos. They can be viewed individually or as a slide show. The view map button brings up Google maps where you can indicate where you took your pictures. The Organize and Edit captions buttons are self-explanatory. A new features link at the top of the page leads to the latest features added. It is now also possible to upload videos from Picasa to your web album. That might be preferable to using YouTube, unless you want the whole world to admire your movie.

The web album displays the URL of your album site either as the address itself or as a short paragraph of html code that you can insert on your web site. Either way, it is best to copy and paste the information since the URL tends to be lengthy and confusing. My vacation pictures are located at <http://picasaweb.google.com/swipcug/westvirginiavacationjune2008>

?Authkey=kovcoyrboay.

To do your correspondents a favor you should convert the URL with SNIPURL (<http://snipurl.com>) or TINYURL (<http://tinyurl.com>) to a simpler address, such as <http://snipurl.com/pimpix>. If you have never done that before, you'll find it easy to do. Just go to <http://snipurl.com> (or the TINYURL site) and paste the URL of your album in the box. Specify an easy-to-remember nickname (such as "Pimpix," but only available in SNIPURL) and "snip it!" the shortened URL (<http://snipurl.com/pimpix>) will be shown and also copied to your clipboard, ready to be pasted in your message.

Gathering CLOUDS

My experience with setting up a photo album "somewhere up there" is a typical example of the current trend towards "cloud" computing. Almost since the beginning of the world wide web we have been using online search engines that access indexed information stored "somewhere up there." many of us have changed from our pc-based email programs to online programs, such as Yahoo or Google Mail, that store our email correspondence on computers "somewhere up there." somewhere up there in the clouds, as it were.

The push is now to extend cloud computing to office suites. Instead of using expensive ms office we can choose to use Google docs and conduct all our administrative activities online, with the option of sharing our work with colleagues far away if necessary. Microsoft, always ready to recognize good ideas after others first thought of them, is moving versions of its office suite online under the "live" banner. Others are jostling to join the crowd.

If this trend continues and spreads to other computer activities, our operating systems, whether windows, Mac, or Linux, will become

less and less important. The functions of the operating system will be taken over by browsers. To those of us using multiple operating systems, such as windows and Linux, we already find that it makes no difference if we use Firefox in windows or Linux. Similarly, Picasa is Picasa and my new web album is the same no matter how i access it.

So far, that all sounds good. But gathering clouds threaten to bring rain. If everybody is going to use the Internet almost all the time, the current Internet infrastructure will not be able to keep up. There will be a need for millions of additional servers and drastically increased connection speeds.

The computer industry is aware of that. According to the Economist (May 24, 2008) Microsoft is building a new \$500 million data center near Chicago. It will require 3 electrical substations with a total capacity of almost 200 megawatts. Google is said to have 3 dozen data centers with an estimated million individual servers. More and more these extensive data centers are being built in out-of-the-way places near sources of low-cost power, even in Iceland with cheap geothermal power. With all this power consumption computers are becoming a major source of global warming.

To increase transmission speeds the industry is eying the airwave bands that will be freed up in February 2009 when analog TV will be phased out. There are so-called white spaces between the frequency bands assigned to TV broadcasts, and tech companies want to use those buffer zones for lightning-fast data transmissions. Initial tests show that it might wipe out nearby HDTV broadcasts, but they keep working at it. (Scientific American, June 2008)

The computer revolution has just begun!

This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

System Mechanic 8 - A PC "Swiss Army Knife"

By Ira Wilsker; APCUG Director,
Columnist, The Examiner, Beau-
mont, TX, Radio and TV Show
Host
[lwilsker\(at\)apcug.net](mailto:lwilsker(at)apcug.net)

WEBSITE:

<http://www.iolo.com>

<http://www.iolo.com/downloads.aspx> - FREE TRIAL SOFTWARE

Frequent readers of this column will be well aware that there are many computer utilities in cyberspace that can improve the performance of our PCs. As we use our computers, the registry becomes cluttered and inefficient; useless files consume valuable real estate on our hard drives; and other maladies caused by the software on our computers deprive us of the performance we paid for and deserve. While I admittedly use several different utilities to maintain peak operating efficiency of my computers, if I had to choose only a single utility for computer maintenance, it would be Iolo's System Mechanic (www.iolo.com). I have used System Mechanic for many years in its earlier versions, but now Iolo has released the latest iteration, System Mechanic version 8.

Simply, System Mechanic 8 is arguably the most comprehensive PC maintenance utility available, with over 40 distinct performance and security tools included, giving it "Swiss Army Knife" features. According to published sales figures, System Mechanic is the #1 best selling PC tune-up software on the market, and has won awards for excellence from dozens of computer publications, including *Cnet's Editors' Choice*, *Windows Magazine*, *PC Computing*, *ZDNet Editors' Pick*, *Computer Shopper's Top 100*, *Computerworld*, and many others.

Rhetorically, why would I choose

System Mechanic 8 over all of its competitors? Because of what it does, its power, versatility, and features; that is why. Compared to its major competitors, none of them offer the feature rich set of functions that System Mechanic offers. According to Iolo, "Over 98% of PC problems are caused by clutter and faulty settings that are the result of everyday PC use." System Mechanic 8 can repair or otherwise remedy virtually all of these problems. Many of a PC's problems can be traced to problems and errors in the registry, a large data file that contains information on the hardware and software installed on the computer. The registry is almost constantly written to, and read, often leaving obsolete data in the registry. This obsolete, and eventually erroneous data left in the registry consumes some system resources, and can promote errors and other problems as faulty data is read and processed. The registry must be periodically purged of useless data, defragmented and compacted in order to contribute to better PC performance, a function that System Mechanic 8 excels at.

Our computers are constantly reading from and writing to the hard drive, and that drive often becomes cluttered, fragmented, and may also have some errors in the data stored on it. While almost all flavors of Windows have some type of "defrag" and "chkdsk" software to defragment the hard drive, and check it for errors, the Windows integral versions of those utilities are very basic and lack the power to do a truly thorough job, as System Mechanic will do. Clutter and useless files consume a lot of the storage space on our hard drives; System Mechanic 8 can identify and remove that clutter, freeing up that hard drive space, making for a more efficient hard drive.

Sometimes, and it will likely happen eventually to each PC user, the computer will not properly boot. For that particular eventuality, System Mechanic 8 will allow the user

to create a bootable emergency CD that may be able to revive "crashed" systems. Another irritant that many of us suffer through on a regular basis is the boringly slow boot process itself, where we wait and wait for our computer to become usable. System Mechanic 8 claims to have 19 different ways that it can speed the boot process by making it more logical and efficient. Another way that we are losing performance that we are paying for is by having improper internet settings. Many of these settings are mundane and not readily accessible to the typical user. By modifying these settings to their ideal point, internet throughput can be improved, in some cases tripled. System Mechanic 8 will analyze our internet connection, and make any changes necessary to maximize performance.

PC security is a major issue that all of us must deal with on a constant basis. System Mechanic 8 contributes to system security by fixing settings that would otherwise allow an intruder to access the computer, making cyber attacks that more difficult. Sometimes we have files that we want to securely delete, being well aware that normally deleted files are easy to recover, which may create another security problem. This utility offers the user a military grade wiping function that can securely delete unwanted data.

System Mechanic 8 retails for \$49.95 for a one-year license, and can be used on up to three computers; discounts are available online (www.iolo.com) for longer licenses.

For those who want an even more feature rich product, Iolo offers System Mechanic Professional, version 8 (\$69.95 for 3 computers). This Professional version is an integrated bundle which includes most of Iolo's other popular products. The bundle includes Iolo's antivirus software, renowned for its hourly updates; and its Personal Firewall to protect from intruders and malicious software. Another program included with the Professional

—continued on next page—

bundle is another personal favorite of mine, Iolo's Search and Recover. This program can recover files that were deleted, including photos, videos, documents, email, music, and other data that may have otherwise been lost. Search and Recover can undelete files from hard drives, digital cameras, memory cards, and almost all other digital media.

Professional also includes DriveScrubber, a utility that can securely erase data from hard drives. This is necessary when donating a computer, selling it, or recycling it. Without securely deleting our personal data, others can access it and use it for a variety of purposes, including identity theft. DriveScrubber overwrites the data using methods that meet strict government and military standards, ensuring the destruction of that data, without harm to the drive itself.

Iolo has a winner in System Mechanic 8. For those who like to try software before they purchase it, Iolo offers a free, 30 day, fully functional trial version of each of its products at www.iolo.com/downloads.aspx. If you try the software, you will probably like it as much as I do, and find it indispensable.

This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Windows XP Expires

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
www.compukiss.com
[sandy\(at\)compukiss.com](mailto:sandy(at)compukiss.com)

On June 30th, 2008, Microsoft started the death march for Windows XP. As of that date, Microsoft stopped shipments of Windows XP as a stand-alone shrink-wrapped product. So after supplies are exhausted, you won't be able to go

into a store and purchase Windows XP. Microsoft also stopped most sales to PC manufacturers. So Dell, Lenovo, HP and others will not get any new copies of Windows XP to install on their mainstream computers. However, Windows XP, Microsoft's longest-lived and best-loved operating system, isn't going to vanish overnight. You will still see copies of the XP software and/or computers with Windows XP in stores until inventories are depleted.

Microsoft has made four important concessions that will also keep XP alive:

1. Microsoft will support Windows XP until April 2014. They will offer updates, security patches, and technical support until that time.

2. Smaller local PC makers can continue to sell PCs with Windows XP until January 2009.

3. Computers with limited hardware capabilities which are sometimes called ultra-low cost PCs (ULCPC) can sell with Windows XP Home until June 2010.

4. With the purchase of Windows Vista Business or Windows Vista Ultimate, the two most expensive versions of Vista, a customer will be able to move back to Windows XP Professional via what Microsoft is calling "downgrade rights."

Details on how this will be handled have not been clearly defined to the public at this time. It is even possible that different manufacturers will handle this in different ways.

To the home users, this all means very little, unless you need a new computer and are violently opposed to Windows Vista. To business users, these new policies and extensions mean that they will be able to keep their fleets of Windows XP computers running for several more years. Microsoft has announced that Windows 7, the next version of Windows, will be available in 2010 so many businesses will be able to skip

Vista entirely instead to Windows 7. Intel has already announced that they will do just that.

What this means for everyone is that Microsoft, while not writing off Vista, has made it an "interim" operating system. Microsoft is still pushing Windows Vista. They recently announced that Vista now supports 77,000 printers, cameras, speakers and other devices and components. They also brag that more than 140 million copies of Windows Vista have already been sold, making it the fastest selling operating system in Microsoft history. So Windows Vista is not a flash-in-the-pan like Windows ME which was quickly replaced by Windows XP.

In my opinion, Vista is both better and safer than Windows XP and if you are already using Vista or plan to make the move, it is not a bad choice. Yet Vista has become a lame duck. Microsoft definitely has a dilemma on their hands. The only way they will come out of this is if they can get Windows 7 out quickly while making it faster, safer, and easier to use. They also need to give it a good name and get the members of the press behind it. I'm not sure if the lumbering giant can pull that off - especially if Apple and/or Linux find a way to take advantage of this Microsoft predicament!

This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Need a sticky note? Put it on your computer!

by Linda Gonse,
Editor & Webmaster,
Orange County IBM PC Users'
Group, CA
[www.orcopug.orgeditor\(at\)orcopug.org](http://www.orcopug.orgeditor(at)orcopug.org)

Sticky note programs for your pc, as you might imagine, are a utility that takes the place of paper Post-It notes that we all stick to our moni-

tors! But, sticky note programs I've researched this year discouraged me from even trying them out. Sometimes they didn't have enough features, or if they did, they were expensive.

Then, someone recommended a program called Stickies, created by Tom Revell, at www.zhornsoftware.co.uk/. So, I looked at Stickies on the web page, liked what I saw, and downloaded the program.

My first discovery about the program is that it is small, 953Kb, and doesn't interfere with system files and doesn't write to the registry. In fact, Stickies stores all its information in a single text-based ini file. When was the last time you had a program on your computer as well-mannered as this one?

An icon in your system tray will allow you quick access to Stickies' features and options. From this dropdown list you can manage your Stickies notes, configure them, get help, and download new skins. When you do make a Sticky, it won't disappear unless you tell it to, and it stays where it is placed. You can edit, format, and print them. Make as many as you want, or as many as your screen space will permit.

But, to save room and keep Stickies organized, they will snap to each other and to the sides of the screen where they can be neatly lined up. You can even "hide" them from view. Besides viewing Stickies on your screen, you can attach them to a website, a document, or a folder, so they only appear when the objects they are attached to are on the screen. Stickies are portable, too. You can transfer Stickies from one computer to another over your TCP/IP network connection, to your PDA and back again, or send to friends in email.

They can be set to "sleep" and appear on a specified date and time, as announcements or reminders. They can even play a sound alarm so they get your attention when they

"awaken"! What's fun is being able to customize the notes with various fonts, colors and buttons. You can even download customized skins from a big selection to change the outward appearance of the notes—plain, borderless, simple border, etc. The notes can be resized, just like the sticky notes in Acrobat.

Stickies are located in five categories within the application so you can see and manage them. You can search for information in Stickies, wake sleeping Stickies, re-store closed Stickies and detach Stickies.

What else? Oh, yes! Another attractive feature of Stickies is...the program is free! What are you waiting for? Try it out and see if you like this little program as much as I do!

This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author.

Saving pictures that show on your computer screen

Tips & Hints by Dick Carricato, member of the Tri County Computer User Group, Florida
www.tccug.net
[d_carricato\(at\)bellsouth.net](mailto:d_carricato(at)bellsouth.net)

These days we are bombarded with beautiful pictures on our computers, and when I see a great picture I'm not happy until I have it stored away in my own computer where I can use it when I want to.

The usual technique used to extract and save pictures from the web, from e-mail, or from any other source that places a picture on the computer screen, is simply to right click on the picture and select "Save picture as..." This will often open the 'My Pictures' folder where the user can select a folder in which to save the picture.

This is a very straight forward, simple, and easy to remember tech-

nique for those situations where it works, and if it worked all the time this article would end right here. However, it often does not work. Sometimes web authors make it difficult for you to copy their pictures, and a right click on one of those pictures produces a grayed (not available) "Save picture as..." selection. Pictures in PDF documents in general cannot be copied, and for that matter, even highlighted text can't be copied from most PDF documents. Very often when an e-mail picture is right-clicked the "Save picture as..." selection is available, but when that option is selected an error box appears saying, "The system cannot find the file specified."

The remainder of this article will be devoted to a single method that allows the user to copy and save any image that shows on his computer screen. This method involves the use of the Windows Print Screen function. Of course, everyone remembers how to use Print Screen (Prt Scn) because we have discussed it in the past. Just in case you have forgotten I'll review it here.

The Prt Scn key is located to the right of the function keys at the top of the keyboard. When Prt Scn is pressed it copies a picture of the entire display to the Clipboard. Pressing Alt-Prt Scn copies an image of the Active window to the Clipboard. Remember that the active window is the one with the bright title bar, and it got that way by clicking the mouse anywhere within the window. The Clipboard is just a section of memory that Windows uses for all Copy and Paste operations. Information is copied from any Windows program to the Clipboard by using the Copy command. Information is pasted to any Windows program from the Clipboard by using the Paste command.

The next time a nice picture shows up on your screen, right-click on it and attempt to save it by

—continued on next page—

using the "Save as..." command. If that fails, click once in the window where the picture is located; maximize the window to make the picture as large as possible, and then press Prt Scn. (In rare cases you might have to hold the Shift key while pressing Prt Scn.) This places the entire window, including the picture that you want, in the Clipboard. The rest of the procedure requires a graphics processor, and fortunately the Windows Paint program will do just fine. It can be found by clicking Start, (all) Programs, Accessories, Paint (or mspaint). To put a shortcut to Paint on your desktop, right click and drag it to your desktop, let go, and select copy here.

So far all we have done is to discover a picture, maximize the window that contains it, and press Prt Scn. Next, open Paint by double clicking the Paint icon on the desktop. In Paint, click Edit and select Paste. Now the entire window that you copied above is visible in the Paint window.

Pick up the selection tool from the group of tools along the left side of the Paint window. To do this, click on the dotted line rectangle. Move the mouse pointer to the upper left corner of the Picture. Then press the left mouse button and drag to the bottom right corner of the picture. This selects the picture that you want to keep. Copy this to the Clipboard by right clicking within the selection and (left) clicking on Copy.

Now you have what you want in the Clipboard, and all that you don't want is visible in Paint. Click File and New, and answer the query to save the garbage with 'no'. Click Edit and Paste to get the picture alone into Paint. Click File and Save as.... Be sure to select a file type of JPEG for your picture. If you don't, Paint will save the file as a bitmap (.BMP) which is quite large, ranging from 1 to 5 megabytes depending on the size of the picture. The JPEG file will be only

Officers 2008 - 2009

Elected Officers

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|--|
| President..... | Judi McDowell..... | (309) 314-1780 | jmcdowell@mchsi.com |
| Vice-President..... | Patty Lowry..... | (563) 332-8679 | heidih@revealed.net |
| Secretary..... | Diana Wolf..... | (309) 797-5413 | theqcs.sec@mchsi.com |
| Treasurer..... | Cheryl Heimburger.. | (309) 496-9435 | cheimbur@hotmail.com |
| Directors at Large..... | Jerry Heimburger..... | (309) 792-1471 | jerry@revealed.net |
| | Susan Peterson..... | (309) 764-2030 | felspaw@sbcglobal.net |
| | Karen Reynolds.... | (309)-797-6572 | kajor31539@gmail.com |
| | Emily Smith..... | (309) 794-9320 | gladriel19@revealed.net |
| | Len Stevens..... | (563) 359-9672 | judylenstevens@msn.com |
| | Ken Welzenbach..... | (563) 326-5436 | kenwelz2@mchsi.com |
| | Vicki Wassenhove.. | (309) 787-2239 | wazz123@gmail.com |
| Director, Past-President | Patty Lowry..... | (563) 332-8679 | heidih@soloconnect.com |
| Director/SIG leader: | | | |
| Beginners..... | Jim Kristan..... | (309) 755-8277 | jmkris@gmail.com |
| Genealogy..... | Len Stevens..... | (563) 359-9672 | judylenstevens@msn.com |
| Digital..... | Norm Dunlap..... | (309) 798-2304 | normdun@gmail.com |
| Internet..... | Ted Huberts..... | (309) 792-9470 | slowhand54@sbcglobal.net |
| Office..... | Judi McDowell..... | (309) 314-1780 | jmcdowell@mchsi.com |
| QBits..... | Joe Durham..... | (309) 764-5570 | joseph_us@yahoo.com |
| Windows..... | Larry Stone..... | (309) 787-5574 | lstone521@mchsi.com |

Appointed Officers

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|
| Membership Director..... | Susan Peterson..... | (309) 764-2030 | felspaw@sbcglobal.net |
| Program Director..... | Patty Lowry..... | (563) 332-8679 | heidih@soloconnect.com |
| Public Relations Dir. | Ruth Thompson..... | (309)-794-4179 | rujan2000@aol.com |
| Publicity..... | Judy Ramsay..... | (309) 764-3394 | kajor31539@gmail.com |
| Finance Committee | | | |
| Chairman..... | Mel VanderHoek..... | (563) 355-5085 | vanderhoek@netexpress.net |
| Special Events Director.. | Open | | |
| Volunteer Events Dir | Open | | |
| APCUG Rep..... | Patty Lowry..... | (563) 332-8679 | heidih@rsoloconnect.com |
| Membership Records..... | Susan Peterson..... | (309) 764-2030 | felspaw@sbcglobal.net |
| QCS Web Site | | | |
| Web Master..... | Vicki Wassenhove.. | (309) 787-2239 | wazz123@gmail.com |
| Q Bits newsletter | | | |
| Co-editors..... | Joe Durham..... | (309) 764-5570 | joseph_us@yahoo.com |
| | Patty Lowry..... | (309) 332-8679 | heidih@soloconnect.com |
| Mailing | Patty Lowry..... | (563) 332-8679 | heidih@soloconnect.com |

Other

| | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--|
| Resource Center Mgr..... | Judi McDowell..... | (309) 314-1780 | jmcdowell@mchsi.com |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--|

about 5% of the size of the bitmap file.

This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

We will be reviewing the latest in genealogy news each month plus learning about new genealogy/family history programs, web sites and research methods.

Genealogy SIG News

Now that summer is over, the Genealogy SIG will start the new year by revisiting the *new* Family Search program.

This all encompassing web site will be gradually made available to everyone on the internet.

QCS Member Raffle

Barb Johnson was not present at the July General Meeting for the Member Attendance raffle. Next months drawing is worth \$25.

You too can win by attending the main meeting each month!

QCS Meeting Dates

| Sun | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Fri | Sat |
|--------|---|--------------------------------|--|----------|---|--------|
| | 1 Sep Labor Day | 2 Sep September 2008 | 3 Sep 6:00 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmc dowell@mchsi.com | 4 Sep | 5 Sep Deadline for QBITS articles | 6 Sep |
| 7 Sep | 8 Sep 7:00 PM Internet SIG Ted Huberts 309-792-9470 slowhand54@sbcglobal.net | 9 Sep | 10 Sep 5:45 PM Beginners SIG * 7:00 PM Best Buy: Cellular Phones | 11 Sep | 12 Sep | 13 Sep |
| 14 Sep | 15 Sep 7:00 PM Genealogy SIG Len Stevens 563-359-9672 judylenstevens@msn.com | 16 Sep | 17 Sep 7:00 PM Digital Media CANCELED 309-798-2304 normdun@gmail.com | 18 Sep | 19 Sep | 20 Sep |
| 21 Sep | 22 Sep 7:00 PM Windows SIG Larry Stone 309-787-5574 lstone521@mchsi.com | 23 Sep | 24 Sep | 25 Sep | 26 Sep | 27 Sep |
| 28 Sep | 25 Sep | 26 Sep | 1 Oct 6:30 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmc dowell@mchsi.com | 2 Oct | 3 Oct Deadline for QBITS articles | 4 Oct |
| 5 Oct | 6 Oct 7:00 PM Microsoft Office CANCELED 309-314-1780 jmc dowell@mchsi.com | 7 Oct October 2008 | 8 Oct TBA | 9 Oct | 10 Oct | 11 Oct |

***Beginner's SIG meets at Tri-City Jewish Center before the QCS program**
Jim Kristan
309-755-8277
jmkris@gmail.com

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.

QCS officers

President:
 Judi McDowell
 309-314-1780
 jmc dowell@mchsi.com

Vice-President
 Patty Lowry
 543-332-8679
 heidiho@soloconnect.com

Secretary
 Diana Wolf
 309-797-5413
 theqcs.sec@mchsi.com

Treasurer
 Cheryl Heimburger
 309-496-9435
 cheimbur@hotmail.com



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

Quad Cities Computer Society
 Tri-City Jewish Center
 2715 30th Street
 Rock Island IL 61201



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.!



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

QCS Home Page URL
<http://www.qcs.org>

Name: _____
 Company: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State, ZIP+4: _____
 Home Phone: _____
 Work Phone: _____
 E-mail: _____
 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"/> |

QCS Meeting
Wednesday
September 10, 2008
7:00 PM

Smart Phones
 by Brett Jones
 Best Buy Mobile Manager



www.mwug.apcug.org