Q BITS

**Wednesday
January 14th, 2009
7:00 PM**

Picasa 3
from Google
with
Norm Dunlap
Digital SIG leader

The QCS thanks NBS ,
the host of the qcs.org site
Network Business Systems NBS
www.nbson.com

This Month in Q BITS..

Monthly meetings are open to the general public.

QCS Review
Members Share Tips

presented by
Sue Peterson
Larry Stone
Vicki Wassenhove

Larry Stone's in depth knowledge of computers and the Windows operating system is a great resource for our club. Once again he proved to be so as he described some very practical tips to help our members solve problems.

If a program is an executable file by itself and doesn't have any program entry or shortcut icon, how can you make one? Larry described various alternatives in Windows all of which are functional.

Go to Run and Search for the executable file on your computer. When it is discovered, right click on it and create an icon on your desktop for it. You can also use Windows explorer to find your executable program file. Then you use the menu to bring up All Users. You navigate down to the Start Menu folder. Use your mouse in the other program window, right click on the .exe file and drag it down to the Start Menu folder.

How do you change your program icon size on your desktop or change the name size? Larry said to right click on an empty space on your desktop, open up the Advanced tab, then select Icon from the menu. From the icon menu you can change the icon size, and also the font size for your shortcuts appearance.

Vicki Wassenhove, our Web designer, has been busy again making several creative and neat improvements to our web site. These efforts are in preparation for the Web design competition at APCUG which begins shortly.

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

The *QCS* is a member of

apcug

By analyzing the use of our site by the **Sitemeter.com** application, Vicki was able to determine that 90% of the users prefer a 1024 X 768 resolution for viewing. Up to this time, our web site has been designed for the 800 x 600 screen.

Now the Web page is more flexible and is resolution size aware which makes for less scrolling and easier viewing as the web site adapts to the user's computer automatically.

She has added another wonderful feature: a site search engine specific to our QCS website. It searches all content, the pages, the online newsletters, SIG news information. A very valuable addition to our web pages.

Additionally each Special Interest Group (SIG) will have their own web page of information and details.

The completed transformation of our QCS web site by Vicki hasn't been completed, and is a beta test mode. Be sure to drop by frequently, soon you will see the wonderful changes appear.

Sue Peterson rounded off the evening with an enjoyable collection of web video humor. One of the more entertaining vignettes was the stirring Western clip of Cat herders. Sue played several clips of ingenious pets, their amazing abilities, and attempts to imitate us.

Our meeting concluded with the attendance member drawing, which was not filled again. Next month's drawing is up to $40. Some serious money and a good incentive to come and see Norm Dunlap's presentation on Picasa 3.0 You will see how this fine free photo application can enhance your computer use and by being at the meeting in person you have the chance to walk home with some change in your pocket! The QCS thanks our three members Larry, Vicki and Sue for their fine presentations. A testimony to the depth of computer resource and help among all of our members.

Cyber News

Welcome to Cyber News, an ad free, spam free online magazine emanating from **gary.stanley.net/studio.htm** 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.

There's a new way to shop on the Internet. You may have already ordered something from **Amazon.com** but now they have something called "Amazon Window Shop," and it's pretty cool. Shop for books, audio books, music, movies, and TV shows. Scroll back and forth, up and down, and click on a window for a sample. Try it out. **www.windowshop.com**

There's also a new way to have dinner and the sky is the limit! How about having cocktails, appetizers, and dinner suspended in thin air? Well, if you've got the money and a little nerve it's all yours. I'd have to have lots of drinks to do

Want to know everything about everything? Well here it is, all on one page! **now.sprint.com/widget**

What did we ever do without cell phones? Technology advances so fast that we want a new model every two years, but what do we do with the old one? How about putting it in your blender. What? Let me take you to "You Tube" and watch a guy do that very thing.

Do you have CCleaner on your computer? If you do are you running it once a week? Don't say ya, ya, ya. Do it! You'll have many less problems. This is the best utility that I have ever used. It will get rid of unused files, clean your registry, and let you edit start up applications. If you're uneasy with computers just do the cleaner. If you're more advanced do all three

functions. If you don't have it, find out how to get it and how to use it. **tinyurl.com/5bs7zz.** By the way, it's free.

How good are you at "eyeballing?" "Well depends on what I'm looking at," might be your reply. Most of us may conjure the word to mean to look at something of beauty. Well, I've got a little "eyeballing game" for you. This isn't hard but will require some thinking, focus, patience, and spatial awareness, and see how you score. **tinyurl.com/3qynfl**

I don't think I'll ever get sick of watching this video. Isn't it funny how we like someone who is humble and we pull for them because of it. **tinyurl.com/2ozxt9**

Google has a new feature where you are able to search millions of historic **images.google.com/ hosted/life** from Life Magazine, most of which were never published. Look for people, places, events, sports, and culture.

I mentioned last month that I established a blog. The original purpose of it was so that family and a few friends could follow along on a trip that we took. I decided to open it to Cyber News readers for the purpose of informing you of items that I write about here that may come up during the month. An example may be an announcement of a critical operating system update or the release of a dangerous virus. You can click on the BLOG button on the top left of this page. Make it a Favorite in your browser if you wish so you can refer to it during the month. Don't click it now though until you have read the "Photography Secret" below.

Photography Secret: Sometimes more is not necessarily better. Case in point; digital cameras. The paparazzi and sports photographers carry expensive DSLRs with expensive lenses to capture action. A professional camera can cost thousands of dollars, but do you need to spend an arm and a leg for a great picture? You might if you're into

'high profile photography" but today there are point and shoot digital cameras on the market that take beautiful pictures at a price that most anyone can afford. In this area, technology has made huge advances! As mentioned, in some circumstances all those extra features on the expensive model are needed, but most of the time an inexpensive camera will do just fine. It's the eye behind the lens that makes a good picture and not the cost of the camera.

An interesting experiment: I have a Nikon D80. The cost of the camera was $1,000, and the cost of the 18-200mm VR lens was $950. With the external flash I have over $2,000 invested. Recently I spent many hours researching before purchasing a small lightweight point and shoot camera. I bought a Canon SX110-IS for $250. It's light weight and I can carry it on my belt. It's simple to operate, has features for advanced photographers, sports a large 3 inch LCD, for viewing your shots, and shoots 9 megapixels. It will zoom over 7 times farther than the Nikon, and in most cases I can't tell the difference in the final quality of the photo. I took two pictures of the same scene at the same time with the same settings, and I wonder if you can tell which one is which.

You can find the answer on **my.members.cox.net/gary.stanley /photos.htm** So, don't let the guy with the "big" camera intimidate you as you might just end up with a photo that looks just as good as his. Isn't that the bottom line?

One negative about this camera is that it uses 2 AA batteries and they don't last long. Lots of small digital cameras use this power source and my advice would be to purchase 4 rechargeable batteries and a charger. That way you can have a spare set charged and ready to use and you won't have to be buying the regular type all the time.

I was seriously considering the Canon G10 which is the next step up from the one I bought. It's priced

at $399 and the big difference is its 15 megapixels versus 9. It's about the same size as the SX110, but nobody needs that many pixels unless you're going to print a picture the size of your wall. Don't get caught up in the megapixel race. More pixels just means that you can print a larger picture, and any 5 to 10 megapixel camera will print a beautiful 8x10 or 11x14 picture and that's all 90% of us want to do.

While researching my anticipated purchase I came across a web site called "The Luminous Landscape." When you snoop around this site, it is obvious this is as professional as it gets. This guy owns a G10 and also a $40,000 Hasselblad. (Big name in professional cameras!) He did the same thing I did taking a photo with each camera, then asking several other professionals to visit his studio for their opinions. **tinyurl.com/5uakgs** and see how far small camera technology has advanced.

Don't be afraid to look around his site for more photo tips.

Thanks for reading Cyber News and viewing my photos!

Broadsides

by Ron Broadhurst, Space Coast PC Users Group, Inc., Florida

These ideas are compiled from years of accumulations from various magazines, books, on-line sites, and my own personal experience. I claim neither originality nor ownership to any of its contents. My only intent is to share the various "tips, "tricks", & "hints" in hopes of helping & maybe enhancing your computing experiences. They are all intended for anyone who uses a PC. It is for beginners as well as advanced users. Enjoy and use as you will.

Ron Broadhurst

HOW TO GET RID OF "SEND ERROR REPORT TO MICRO-SOFT"

Right click My Computer on the desktop or in the Start menu.

Click Properties.

Click the Advanced tab.

Click the Error Reporting button at the bottom.

Click Disable error reporting. You can select the checkbox under it if you still want to be notified when errors occur.

Click OK.

Note that you can disable error reporting for the operating system only, or for programs only, by unchecking the appropriate box under the Enable error reporting option.

You can also configure error reporting only for specific programs by clicking the Choose Programs button.

ALPHABETIZE START MENU LISTINGS

When you install a new program on your system, it will often appear at the end of your Start menu. Reorganizing files alphabetically in the All Programs menu does not affect how they appear in your start menu. In order to alphabetize your start menu, you'll want to click Start and select All Programs. On any file or folder right-click and then select Sort By Name. Now all of your Start menu programs are in alphabetical order. You can also sort subfolders in your Start menu the same way.

MAKE YOUR QUICK LAUNCH ICONS BIGGER

Unlock the Toolbar

Right click the QL toolbar

Select the View tab

Select large icons

PIN AN APPLICATION TO START MENU

The Windows XP Start menu includes an area where two or more Microsoft applications, usually Internet Explorer and Outlook Express, are permanently positioned for easy access. You can add your favorite application to this same convenient location. Open Windows Explorer and locate the executable file for the application. Right-click the file and select Pin To Start Menu. The application will now appear in the Start menu. To remove an application, locate it, right-click it, and select Unpin From Start Menu.

Alternatively, you can right-click the app in the Start menu and click Unpin From Start Menu.

CHANGE SYSTEM SOUNDS

Through the Control Panel you can change your system's program event sounds. Click Start and Control Panel. If you're using Category View, click Sounds, Speech, and Audio Devices; and Sounds and Audio Devices. If you are using the Classic View, click Sounds and Audio Devices. This loads the Sounds and Audio Devices Properties dialog box. Choose the Sounds tab. Select the sound you'd like to change in the Program events box, and then select a new sound from the Sounds drop-down menu. Or select a sound you've saved to the hard drive by using the Browse button to navigate to the sound file. Change as many sounds as you like. Save your changes as a sort of theme from the Sound Scheme drop-down menu above the Program events box. (Select the blank line and click Save As.) You can also choose to disable program event sounds. When you're finished click OK.

SAVING E-MAIL MESSAGES

To save e-mail messages highlight the message you want to save, then click on File -Save As. Select where you want to save the message and then save it as a .txt file.

Moving on to Vista - Part 10

by Neil Stahfest, Librarian, Tacoma Area PC User Group, Washington
http://www.tapcug.org, ncstahfest@msn.com

Most of us who upgrade to Windows Vista from an older version of Windows encounter compatibility problems. Vista doesn't want to recognize some programs as valid or authorized Windows programs even though they worked with Windows XP. Does this mean that you have to abandon them or upgrade to a new? Vista version of your favorite programs?

I wish I could say no but the real answer is maybe not. Microsoft has included something called a Program Compatibility Wizard with Vista. The idea is that, if you have an older program that doesn't work with Vista, you can use this program to automatically make some modifications to make it compatible and make it work.

To access the wizard, go to Start, Control Panel and then click on Programs. Next, under Programs and Features, click on? Use an older program with this version of Windows. This will start the wizard. Now follow the step-by-step, on-screen instructions. When you finish, try to run your program. I'm told that most programs that worked with Windows XP will work after you do this but programs that worked with older versions of Windows may not. You shouldn't try to use the wizard with disk utility programs, system programs and anti-virus programs. They usually won't work and may actually cause damage to your computer's system.

While we're on the subject of compatibility and changes, let's look at the Start button, or jelly bean as some call it, in the lower left corner of your screen. Place your mouse on the right hand side of the task bar at the bottom of the screen. The box next to Hide Inac-

tive Icons is checked by default. If you click on the Customize button to the right you will see why. You'll probably see dozens of icons listed here. Most are turned off. If you make changes and don't like the results, click on the Default Settings button and then click on OK. We're almost done with the Notification Area box.

The bottom half of the box shows which system icons will show. This is a personal preference (well, so is all of this). If you are using Vista's Clock gadget you can probably uncheck the Clock function because it is redundant. I like to leave Volume checked. Its a convenient place to turn sound on and off and control the volume. I also leave Network checked. It makes it easy to see if my network connection is working. The Power option is useful if you have a laptop computer, otherwise turn it off.

I think we've covered enough for this month. Are you getting comfortable with Windows Vista? I am. For those of you still using Windows XP, don't be in a hurry to change! Wait for Windows 7 if you can (coming in 2010).

The New, The Best, and The Worst
by Pim Borman
SW Indiana PC Users Group, Inc.
November 2008

Cell Phones - The New Computers
Over the years cell phones have grown from simple portable telephones into multifunction devices incorporating calendar and data storage, text messaging, music and video players, digital cameras, and Internet access. They have become miniature versions of personal computers that incidentally also make phone calls.
In comparison with computers, mobile phones are at a disadvantage with respect to screen and speaker size, slow Internet connections and high operating cost.

In developing countries, such as India, China and many parts of Africa and South America that lack adequate wired telephone connections, cell phones are in widespread use. Many of the users there don't have, and can't afford, personal computers. User charges are a small fraction of those in the United States and Europe so that cell phones are rapidly becoming substitutes for personal computers in the developing nations.

According to an article on the BBC News Website, sales of smartphones are expected to overtake those of laptops in the next 12 to 18 months.

Qualcomm is readying a 1 GHz Snapdragon chipset capable of handling 12 megapixel photos. The problem in designing advanced electronics for cell phones is that they have to operate at very low wattage because they are carried in your pocket, without cooling fan, and the battery is expected to last days rather than hours. One approach is to use multi-core chips that can switch off the cores that are not needed. 3D graphics acceleration chips to support gaming are also under development. NVidia's APX 2500 chip reportedly has enough 3D graphics capability to handle Quake 3, a PC game dating from 1999.

As mobile smartphones are gradually morphing into full-fledged computers, the hackers can't be far behind. According to the BBC Online News, the Emerging Cyber Threats Report from the Georgia Institute of Technology Security Center (GTISC) has identified mobile devices as particularly vulnerable. As they are increasingly used for financial and payment purposes they become a draw for cyber criminals.

One obstacle to the miscreants are the different operating systems used by various brands of smartphones. There are Microsoft's Mobile Windows, Apple's OS X for the iPhone, the global open operating system Symbian used by a large majority of cell phones, including Nokia, Samsung and Sony-Ericsson. The latest addition to the mobile OS's is Android, an open standard for mobile devices based on Linux. It has been developed by the Open Handset Alliance, including Google, HTC, Intel, Motorola, Qualcomm, T-Mobile, Sprint Nextel and NVIDIA. The first handset using Android, the T-Mobile G-1 was demonstrated in September 2008 and is expected to go on sale around now.

It is not surprising that the first virus attacks are reported on the widely-used Symbian platform. Network operators report receiving 100,000 virus incidences a day, 50% up from last year. Thus far the viruses are unsophisticated and the mobile operators make a special effort to intercept them. They are likely to become more sophisticated before long. Users of smartphones are advised to start using caution before running attachments from unknown sources and to check their monthly bills for problems.

Instant-on Computers?
Do you remember the days when it would take half a minute or so after you turned on a radio before you'd hear any sound? The days before transistors when vacuum tubes did the work and needed time to heat up? Well, you're still pretty spry for your age. And that short waiting time was nothing compared to the time it takes your computer to get ready for work. After all, when you turn on your PDA there is no wait, so why can't computers be like that?

The answer, of course, is that computers provide a much broader

spectrum of services than a simple PDA, and it takes time to access the hard drive and retrieve and install all those drivers for printers, speakers, USB connections, networks, graphics, and what have you. At least Windows no longer laboriously counts the bytes in your RAM as it starts up, a check that could take up to several minutes all by itself with current multi-gigabyte memories. Still, there is significant demand for computers, especially laptops, that start up (almost) instantly.

There are several ways to achieve this. One is to keep the computer turned on in sleep mode, keeping the current state in active memory for instant wake-up. That works fine, but is a little like cheating since the computer is never fully shut down. It is especially unattractive for laptops with limited battery capacity.

Another approach is to provide an instant-on feature that is limited to only a few applications, typically similar to those provided in PDAs. Dell has incorporated such a feature for some of its desktop and laptop computers that gives instant access to calendars, contacts, the Internet, and other basic tools with the push of a special button. Microsoft developed a similar tool that they have not commercialized yet. According to InfoWorld (Elizabeth Montalbano, October 17, 2008) Microsoft is considering such a feature in their forthcoming Windows 7.

The most attractive solution would be to store the current state at shutdown on a solid state flash memory chip. Until recently, such memory chips of sufficient capacity, useful life time, and at affordable cost were not available. According to PCWorld (November 2008) Intel announced in August a new Solid State Drive (SSD) chip that significantly improves the read-write speeds compared to hard drives. That in itself would not be sufficient to provide instant-on startups. There is no reason I can see, however, why those chips

could not be used as well to store the current state of the computer at shutdown so it could instantly resume its tasks when turned back on. Intel rates the chips for five years of useful life when writing 20 GB of data per day, and 1.2 million hours between failure, usually only reserved for the best of hard drives.

Leave it up to Google to come up with something like this!!!
Submitted by Bill Powell – FVPCA

Here's a number worth putting in your cell phone, or your home phone speed dial: 1-800-goog411 (1-800-466-4411).

This is an awesome service from Google, and it's free -- great when you are on the road. Don't waste your money on information calls and don't waste your time manually dialing the number. This phone number will give you, free of charge, the number of any business you want and then connect you to it for FREE! Let's say I am driving along in my car and I need to call the golf course and I don't know the number. I hit the speed dial for information that I have programmed (1-800-466-4411).

The voice at the other end says, 'City & State.' I say, ' Garland , Texas ' He says, 'Business, Name or Type of Service.' I say, Firewheel Golf Course.' He says, 'Connecting' and Firewheel answers the phone. How great is that? This is nationwide and it is absolutely free!

Click on the link below and watch the short clip for a quick demonstration.
http://www.google.com/goog411

The Deals Guy
by Bob (The Cheapskate) Click, Greater Orlando Computer Users Group

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.

*Lost In Space
A lot is written about cloud computing lately and I wonder how many of you are as confused about what that really is as I am. It would seem that cloud computing has to do with keeping your data stored on some distant server or storage service where you hope it is safe. To me, that's a new name for an old concept, uploading it to some distant storage service on the Internet. On the other hand, in any offsite concept of storage, things must go right no matter what the concept is. In reality, it's still possible that things could go terribly wrong. Read this short article from Information Week magazine about Nirvanix, whose service turned sour because of a third-party vendor assisting in providing their service:
www.informationweek.com/news/software/hosted/showArticle.jht l?articleID=210602537&pgno=4
A bad experience like that can shatter your confidence in Software as a Service, or Cloud Computing. The article is "Beyond Online Storage" and the crisis description is near the end of the article.

Perhaps you could do your own "Cloud Computing." For example,

put some servers in grandma's house. She might have a spare bedroom now that the family no longer lives there. <G> Perhaps there are ways to do cloud computing yourself, which would make it as secure as you like, and if something goes wrong, you should still have the data, physically. That might also be an advantage since DNS hijacking is becoming more prevalent these days. (I couldn't resist a tongue-in-cheek comment!)

*Don't Trust Anybody!

I'm on my soapbox again this month. We purchased a new microwave oven (above the stove type) from Best Buy after considerable shopping because they were the cheapest at the time. Some of you might remember my lawsuit against Best Buy several years ago. We had written them off for shopping, but decided to try them again since this was a different store. We bought the unit and when they loaded it into my pickup, I checked the box closely before accepting it, and it was not damaged. That led me to believe that the microwave oven was in good condition. Later on, I had a professional installer over to help me with the installation because of the difficult mounting space over the range. When we opened the box, the microwave's metal case was badly bent, and the door alignment was bad. The installer said the unit had obviously been dropped. Needless to say, the unit would not work.

When I tried to take it back to Best Buy, they said that once I took possession of the unit, it was my responsibility; and they would not replace it, since I had probably damaged it myself. However, they sent it to their repair facility for evaluation. Obviously, Best Buy's service facility would not repair the damaged unit under the warranty, and said it could not even be repaired. As a last resort, I tried calling Best Buy's corporate headquarters, but to no avail. That conversation lasted about one min-

ute before I got the same response as the store gave me and a quick goodbye, so there went $300. No more dealings with Best Buy for us, although perhaps other stores would also have taken that attitude. I guess it could be said that you should check the contents of the box, and not take anything for granted, when picking something up yourself.

It was suggested by a friend that I also call Samsung, which I did; but they didn't seem to care either. For what it's worth, the metal in the Samsung microwave's case was very thin and flimsy. The installer suggested not replacing it with another Samsung.

*Do You Have Memory Problems With Your Passwords?

Why not give KeePass a try? Many people try the wrong methods for managing passwords, such as using the same one for everything so it's easy to remember. All the thief has to do is obtain that one password, and he can have you hurting. KeePass will help you be better organized, and perhaps you will develop better and safer password methods. KeePass is FREE, and it's also open source. Check it out at **keepass.info**/ .

That's it for this month. I'll have some other new product announcements on my Web site. Meet me here again next month, if your editor permits.

Bob (The Cheapskate) Click
**bobclick@bellsouth.ne
www.dealsguy.com/.**

Hints, Tips, & Rants
by Dale Atchison
Tampa Bay Computer Society

Note: Most of these links point to the owners' websites, or to sites that know they have permission to redistribute the software. This was easier for me than to read the vendors' licenses to see if I could post the actual programs. The only exceptions are for those programs where I recommend a program that can no longer be found

on the Web, or where I recommend an earlier version of a program over its currently-distributed version — and I'll explain why.

MailWasher Troubles

I've been using the free version of MailWasher 2. I know there are newer versions out there, but they are rigged to forget all your visual settings and display a 'beg screen' every ten starts, until you give up and buy the program --- I don't want that. And, I use the free version of avast! 4.8. Here's a gotcha I found last week:

By default, all of avast!'s security scanners are set to Normal sensitivity; I had set the email scanner to its High setting, thinking more security could only be a good thing, right? Ya know what? Uh-uh. When I receive a large batch of spam messages in the account I filter with MailWasher (the free version can only filter one account per user), most if not all get marked for Bounce and Deletion. But when I click on Process Mail, avast! sees a rash of nearly-identical emails from me to various recipients; the program decides my PC has been infected and is now acting as a spam zombie. It isn't that much trouble to click to give each and every bounced email permission to proceed, but it kinda defeats the purpose of having an automated spam filter. So, don't change the avast email scanner sensitivity, just leave it at "Normal".

And while I'm talking about MailWasher...

If you're already using it, you know you can add whole domains to the Friends or Blacklist by right-clicking anywhere on the message line, then choosing Add to blacklist (-), Add to friends list (+), Add the entire domain to the blacklist, or Add the entire domain to the friends list. This is very useful for blocking those domains that seem to be used only for spamming, or to whitelist domains you do business with that might send you emails from more

than one address. But beware: if you blacklist one of the major ISP's like AOL, Hotmail, Earthlink, RoadRunner, Knology, etc., any email you might receive from friends who are not yet on your whitelist will automatically be marked for Deletion and Bouncing. So, to be sure you haven't inadvertently blocked most of your legitimate email, you should periodically check the blacklist to see if it includes any domains that you didn't really mean to block. Here's how:

In MailWasher, click on Tools » Blacklist & Friends List. The Blacklist is on the left. Grab the vertical scrollbar and drag it to the bottom of the list. All those addresses that start with an asterisk are blacklisted domains; all mail from any sender at any of those domains will be marked for deletion and bouncing. Read carefully up the list; if you see any domain(s) from which you might expect to receive legitimate email, click once on the domain to highlight it, then click Delete. Continue perusing the list from the bottom up, until you get to an address that doesn't start with an asterisk. Click OK to close the window, then "X" out of MailWasher.

As stated above, I use an older version of MailWasher so as to avoid the beg screens.

Recently, I've tried out several of the free utilities suggested by other contributors to this newsletter. In the main, I've been pleased. But there have been a few surprises, too, most noticeably the failure of my website hit counters after using IOBit's Advanced System Care. It turns out the tracking cookie used by **Statcounter.com** is technically classed as spyware: it keeps up with your visits to the site that uses the free hit counter. I see the logic, but I also want the hit counters to work! I fixed the problem like this: in Internet Explorer 7, click on Tools » Internet Options » Privacy. First off, make sure the slider is set to Medium High, then click on Sites. Look down the list, find an entry for Statcounter.com, and click

Remove All. Next, type Statcounter.com in the text box labeled Address of Website, and click on Allow. When you're done removing then adding sites, click OK » OK to close Internet Options.

A similar approach should repair any broken helpers that depend on cookies to perform their functions.

Till next month...

News From the Help Desk

Each month, we receive numerous technical support calls and email messages. Some computer problems are fairly common, and we find that many callers struggle to resolve the same issues. In this article, we cover some of the most common or timely tech support questions and provide our solution for each of them.

Q. I have a slow Internet connection, and with all the flash animations on Web sites these days, Web pages often take a very long time to load. How can I block flash animations?

A: Flash animations are very cool eye candy, but they can certainly slow down your Web browsing, especially if you have a slower Internet connection. There are a couple of different ways you can go about blocking them.

First, you may be able to do so by changing your Web browser's options. In Internet Explorer 7, for example, all you have to do is click Tools, click Internet Options, and click the Advanced tab. Scroll down until you reach the Multime-

dia section and uncheck the Play Animations In Webpages box. Click Apply, click OK, and restart IE7 for the change to take effect.

You can also download a browser add-on to do the task for you. For example, Flashblock 1.5.6 is an add-on to Mozilla Firefox that blocks flash animations but leaves placeholders, so you can click various animations if you decide you want to see them. You can download Flashblock from flashblock.mozdev.org.

Q. How can I add password protection to a file or folder?

A: Technically, you can't in Windows, although one thing you can do in Windows XP is compress a file or folder and then password-protect the compressed version. Right-click the item to be compressed, point to Send To, and select Compressed (Zipped) Folder. Double-click the newly created compressed folder. When the window appears, click File and Add A Password. Enter a password for the folder, enter it again to confirm it, and click OK.

click to PopUp a Larger Image

Setting permissions for files and folders is an easy way to prevent others from accessing your sensitive data.

Certain applications will also let you add password protection. For example, in Microsoft Word 2007, click the Office button and Save As. Within the Save As dialog box, click the Tools menu and select General Options. Finally, enter a password in the Password To Open or Password To Modify box, click OK, re-enter your password, click OK, and click Save.

If you want to protect files and folders via Windows, you can do the next best thing(s) to password protection: Encrypt some files or set up access permissions. Note that not every option is available on

every Windows OS (operating system); for example, encryption of files and folders isn't supported in Windows Vista Starter, Home Basic, and Home Premium.

To encrypt a file or folder, simply right-click it and select Properties. On the General tab, click Advanced, checkmark the Encrypt Contents To Secure Data box, and click OK. Click Apply to make the changes take effect. (You may have to choose whether to encrypt only the file or the file and parent folder and click OK.) This will prevent users logged in under other accounts from accessing this info.

Setting up access permissions is nearly as simple. Follow the same directions as above to reach the Properties window. Click the Security tab and select one of the entries under Group Or User Names. (Click Edit in Vista.) Check any options you want to activate under Deny and click OK. For example, if you have folders you don't want other users to be able to access or change, you can deny the Read or Write options.

Q. I have two computers; one has 512MB of RAM, and one has 1GB of RAM. More RAM means a computer is faster, right?

A: That's partially true. The fact is, there are many factors that influence how fast a computer operates, and RAM is one of them.

But there are other components to consider: The processor, graphics card, and hard drive are three main components that affect a computer's performance. A computer with a 3GHz processor will most likely be faster than one with a 2.1GHz processor, for example. A high-end graphics card will outperform a budget card, leading to better performance. A hard drive that spins at 4,500rpm will be slower than one rated at 10,000rpm.

You must also consider the level of maintenance performed on one computer vs. another; the better-maintained computer may be

quicker. Further, different operating systems have different requirements; for example, Microsoft suggests 128MB of RAM is sufficient to run Windows XP but recommends at least 1GB for Windows Vista.

It may make more sense to ask this question: "I have a computer with 512MB of RAM. If I increase the total amount of RAM to 1GB, will my computer run faster?" The answer to that question is "Yes".

Q. My computer is having trouble booting; it seems to want to boot from something or somewhere other than my hard drive. What can I do to make it boot normally?

A: Your problem is that the boot order in the BIOS (Basic Input/Output System) needs to be changed. Basically, your computer is currently configured to look at your CD-ROM or floppy drive for bootable media before looking at your hard drive. Having the BIOS configured in this way is necessary when, for example, you're first installing your operating system and the computer needs to boot from the installation CD or DVD.

To change the BIOS settings, reboot your computer and continuously press DELETE (or whatever your motherboard manufacturer suggests — for example, sometimes you need to press F2) until you reach the BIOS screen. (Don't worry, you'll know when you get there!) Note that you most likely will be unable to use your mouse in the BIOS, so all navigation must be done with the keyboard.

Every BIOS is a little different, but you should see something along the lines of Advanced BIOS Features. Move the cursor down to highlight Advanced BIOS Features (or the equivalent) and press ENTER. Move down to First Boot Device and press ENTER. Select Hard Disk, press ENTER, and press F10 to save your changes. When prompted with the Save To CMOS

And Exit (Y/N) dialog box, press Y and then ENTER.

Q. My firewall gives me alerts and messages all the time about this or that program trying to access the Internet. Do I have a virus or what?

A: Actually, it sounds like your firewall is doing its job; it's blocking programs on your computer from accessing the Internet and also preventing certain programs from accessing your computer via the Internet.

click to PopUp a Larger Image

When your firewall is on, it mediates access to and from the Internet, but you can make exceptions for certain programs manually.

However, there are some programs that you don't want to be blocked. Here's an obvious example: If you block Internet Explorer from accessing the Internet, you won't be able to conduct any Web browsing from that browser. Many firewalls, including Windows Firewall, let you configure the firewall to allow access for certain programs.

Every firewall is going to look a little different, so ultimately you'll have to check your chosen software's instructions, but an explanation of how to change these settings in Windows Firewall is in order.

In Vista, click Start, Control Panel, and Allow A Program Through Windows Firewall. (In WinXP, click Start, Control Panel, Security Center, and Windows Firewall). First, click the General tab and make sure the Firewall is on; if it isn't, click On (Recommended) and click Apply. Click the Exceptions tab and check the box next to any programs you want to let through the firewall. Click OK to close the window.

Compiled by Seth Colaner

Some Interesting Web Sites

I found these Internet sites while reading other newsletters and thought I would share them.

The first two are for crafters. To get patterns for counted cross-stitch go to **www.alitadesigns.com.** Another site for free patterns is **http://www.freepatterns.com/.**

These days CD and DVD burning are of interest to many computer users. Check out **http://www.cdburnerxp.se/** for CDBurnerXP is a **free** application to burn CDs and DVDs, including Blu-Ray and HD-DVDs. It also includes the feature to burn and create ISOs, as well as a multilanguage interface. Everyone, even companies, can use it for free. It does not include adware or similar malicious components.

Looking for classical music. **Classic Cat** is a directory with links to over 4000 free to download classical performances on the internet, sorted by composer and work. **http://www.classiccat.net/.**

Looking for something ususual. Check out **http://www.thinkgeek.com/.** While brousing around the site, I found a t-shirt with musical instrument sounds on the front.

Looking for a little entertainment. Check out **www.thisisjustcool.com** This site is filled with cool things such as videos that are often of a humorous content. Pictures include the ususual like bikes in trees, children holding the sun, and rare animal photos.

Looking for something to fill the long winter days. At Make-Stuff, **www.makestuff.com** you can learn a multitude of things. There is a section for Crafts and Projects. Kid Stuff is designed for things of interest to kids, such as folding origami. Cooking is always an interesting topic. Who isn't always looking for new recipes? Formulas and Remedies include home remedies. Looking for gardening tips, this is

the place. Check out the Holiday suggestions. Need Sewing tips, look no further. The last area I will tell you about is Recycling. This is not just about what to put in the recycling bins, but things you can make with the items you ususally throw away.

Google ROME
earth.google.com/home /index.html

Google has creatively added to their Google Earth site a fully interactive 3D tour of ancient Rome. A fascinating stroll awaits you as you click and move your way down these magnificent thoroughfares.

QCS Meeting Dates

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri	Sat
		January 2009		1 Jan Party Time!	2 Jan	3 Jan
4 Jan	5 Jan 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	6 Jan	7 Jan 6:30 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	8 Jan	9 Jan Deadline for QBITS articles	10 Jan
11 Jan	12 Jan 7:00 PM Internet SIG Ted Huberts 309-792-9470 slowhand54@sbcglobal.net	13 Jan	14 Jan 5:45 PM Beginners SIG * 7:00 PM Main Meeting Picasa 3 Norm Dunlap	15 Jan	16 Jan	17 Jan
18 Jan	19 Jan 7:00 PM Genealogy SIG Len Stevens 563-359-9672 judylenstevens@msn.com	20 Jan	21 Jan 7:00 PM Digital Media SIG Norm Dunlap 309-798-2304 normdun@gmail.com	22 Jan	23 Jan	24 Jan
25 Jan	26 Jan 7:00 PM Windows SIG Larry Stone 309-787-5574 lstone521@mchsi.com	27 Jan	28 Jan	29 Jan	30 Jan	31 Jan
1 Feb	2 Feb 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	3 Feb **February 2009**	4 Feb 6:30 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	5 Feb	6 Feb Deadline for QBITS articles	7 Feb

*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.

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

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Membership Level

		New	Renewal
Full Time Student	$20	☐	☐
Individual	$30	☐	☐
Family	$40	☐	☐

QCS Meeting
Wednesday
January 14th, 2009
7:00 PM

Picasa 3
**from Google
with
Norm Dunlap**
Digital SIG leader