

QBITS

Quad-Cities Computer Society
Newsletter for March 2009
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QCS Review Acronis True Image 2009 Acronis Disk Director Suite 10

www.ugr.com
presented remotely by
Gene Barlow
with assistance from
Larry Stone

By Joe Durham

Gene Barlow of User Group Relations had visited our club many times. He gave a brief tutorial on backing up your computer: the reasons for doing this, the way to do it and why Acronis is the preferred method to accomplish the task.

Gene was not here in person but visited us via the Web. With the aid of Skype internet telephony, and IBM's Samtime Unyte remote presentation software we were able to hear and see Gene's presentation from St. George, Utah through the network. Several members of the audience had been to St. George.

The sound quality was excellent and the IBM software allowed us to see his computer desktop and the Acronis software in action from his home. We did experience a few hiccups during the presentation, but cutting edge methods are challenging. Nonetheless our audience enjoyed this style participated with several questions. It is a method worth doing again.

One of the essential lessons of computing is that our hard drives some where down the road will fail us. We have to be prepared if we don't want to lose our valuable data and waste many hours getting back to square one.

Gene offered the following principles to a sane management of our computers. Purchase an external hard drive of equal or greater size than your internal one. Dedicate this external hard

—continued on next page—

Wednesday
March 11, 2009
7:00 PM

**Remote
Computing**
Helping Each Other
with Don Singleton

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

This Month in *QBITS*..

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

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

With winter upon us, be sure and
check the web site for meeting
information. www.qcs.org

The QCS is a member of



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

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drive for backup use only. Use an image backup of your system, not a file backup software. A file backup system is an incomplete method. You would have to load all of your applications and then their updates if your system crashed.

An image backup creates an exact copy of your computer hard drive. As a result with the proper software, you can restore your system within minutes completely and with confidence.

Finally once you have your external hard drive selected, and your backup software installed decide on a regular backup plan. Gene suggested a full backup on the first of the month. Then create incremental backups weekly throughout the month.

For extra redundancy, Gene suggested you make full backups through a three month period along with the incremental weekly ones. This helps to insure a fallback position in case one of the full backups is faulty or has been discovered to contain a virus for example. Then incremental backups thereafter.

Backup preparation is vital, and at today's hardware prices a reasonable approach: external hard drives can be purchased in a range from \$55 - \$100 that would cover many users' needs.

Gene proceeded to demonstrate the easy to understand Acronis interface. He created an incremental backup as a demonstration. The process was quick, effortless and took a bit over a minute to complete. Larry Stone offered his own testimony on its ease of use. The Acronis CD's that Gene sent to our club for purchase includes a 45 minute video presentation and a 15 page tutorial written by Gene which makes it virtually unlikely that you would install and use Acronis software improperly.

User Group Relations offered our club a 17% discount on top of the regularly discounted list price of Acronis True Image 2009. There were copies of Acronis's partition

software Acronis Disk Director Suite10 that were available for purchase during the meeting. Several members took advantage of these special offers at the meeting.

Acronis software works on all XP editions and Vista versions, including the 64 bit edition. Additionally if you computer fails completely, with Acronis software can create a bootable edition of Acronis. Boot this from a floppy drive, a CD drive, or a flash drive. Once Acronis boots from these media it will access your external backup device and restore your system.

The QCS would like to thank Gene for his fine remote presentation and offering a copy of Acronis True Image and Acronis Disk Director Suite 10 for raffle.

Election of Officers at March General Meeting

Following is the slate of officers that are up for election at the March 11 General Meeting

President.....Judi McDowell
Vice President... Patty Lowry
Secretary.....Diana Wolf
Treasurer. Cheryl Heimburger
Directors-at-Large
Harry Galley
Jerry Heimburger
Susan Peterson
Karen Reynolds
Emily Smith
Vicki Wassenhove

Nominations will also be taken from the floor.

New By-Laws Vote

The Board of Directors are recommending the following changes to the by-laws. The changes will be

voted on at the March 11th General Meeting. The recommended changes are:

Original - 3.02

Mission: Specifically, this organization is organized to:

(a) provide a forum for communication ideas, resolving problems, and increasing the effectiveness of user of microcomputers and their related software and peripherals;

(b) educate the public concerning the advantages and disadvantages of microcomputers.

(c) publish a monthly newsletter for distribution to members, area libraries and educational institutions.

Add: (d) provide a public internet web site as an additional communication medium to attract new members and inform existing membership about meetings and services offered.

Original - 5.01 Membership

Classes: There shall be three classes of membership in this organization; student, individual, couple (or family). Any person shall be eligible for membership in the appropriate selected membership class upon payment of such dues as may from time to time be fixed by the board.

Proposed - 5.01 Membership

Classes: There shall be three classes of membership in this organization; student, individual, family, honorary and life. Any person shall be eligible for membership in the appropriate selected membership class upon payment of such dues as may from time to time be fixed by the board.

(a) Student: An individual under the age of 23 who is enrolled as a full time student in a school for general or higher education.

(b) Individual: Any individual member joining exclusively for his own benefit.

(c) Family: Two or more individuals residing in the same house-

hold. Each member will have a vote in business requiring a majority vote of the membership, but will receive only one newsletter per household.

(d) Honorary: A person performing service and/or making substantial contributions to the society may be awarded and Honorary Membership by the Board of Directors. Membership will last for a period of time determined by the Board of Directors. Evaluation of each Honorary Membership will be reviewed by the Board of Directors at time of renewal and will be continued for another year if approved by a majority of the Board of Directors.

(e) Life: Someone who has established a relationship with the QCS and had provided continued support through works and deeds. This membership shall last for the lifetime of the Society.

Delete - 6.03 Special Meetings: A special meeting of the members may be called by any of the following: (i) the board of directors; (ii) the president; or (iii) five per cent (5%) or more of the membership, provided that in all cases not less than three (3) weeks notice shall be given to all members of such special meeting.

Original - 6.04 Quorum: One-tenth (1/10th) of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting of the members. The members present at any duly called meeting at which a quorum is present may continue to transact business until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough members to leave less than a quorum, if any action taken (other than adjournment) is approved by at least a majority of the members required to constitute a quorum.

Proposed - 6.04 Quorum: A majority of the members in attendance shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting of the members. The members present at any duly called meeting at

which a quorum is present may continue to transact business until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough members to leave less than a quorum, if any action taken (other than adjournment) is approved by at least a majority of the members required to constitute a quorum.

Delete - 6.05 Meeting Adjournment: Any members meeting may be adjourned from time to time by the vote of a majority of the members represented.

Delete - 6.06 Meeting Notice Given: Notice of a meeting shall be deemed given to any member who attends the meeting without protesting before or at its commencement about the lack of adequate notice.

Original - 7.03 Vacancy Defined: A vacancy in the Board of Directors shall be deemed to exist on the occurrence of the following:
(c) The vote of a majority of the entire Board of Directors to remove a director.

Proposed - (c) The vote of a majority of the members of the Board of Directors present to remove a director.

Original - 8.02 The Board of Directors shall meet monthly at such time and place as shall from time to time be announced by the board of directors.

Proposed - 8.02 Meetings of the Board: The Board of Directors shall meet monthly at such time and place as shall from time to time be announced by the Board of Directors. Business of the QCS can be conducted with a majority vote of Board Members in attendance.

Original - 8.04 Removal of Officers: Any officer may be removed, with or without cause, by a vote of majority of the Board of Directors, at any regular or special meeting

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of the board.

Proposed - 8.04 Any board member may be removed for cause, by a vote of a majority of the Board of Directors present, at any regular or special meeting of the board.

Original - 8.06 Vacancies Filled: A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or any other cause shall be filled in the manner prescribed in these bylaws for regular appointments to that office EXCEPT THAT it shall be mandatory that the Board of Directors fill the remaining term of any vacancy in the office of President, Vice-President, Secretary or Treasurer within thirty (30) days of the creation of that vacancy by appointment from a pool of current or prior Board of Directors members.

Add - Any board member who misses four or more consecutive board meetings, will be subject for consideration of removal

Original - 8.08 Vice-President's Duties: The vice-president shall:
(b) be responsible for general meeting programs.

Proposed - (b) be responsible for general meeting programs, unless a Program Chairperson is appointed.

Original - 9.01 Elections: Elections shall be held at the regular monthly meeting in March of each year. In the event of lack of a quorum, elections shall be held at the next regular meeting at which a quorum is present and all officers shall serve until such elections, subordinating the provisions of section 9.02.

Proposed - 9.01 Elections: Elections shall be held at the regular monthly meeting in March of each year and will be decided by a majority vote of members present.

Original - 9.02 Term of Office: Term of office shall be one year,

and all officers shall assume their responsibilities immediately following the election.

Proposed - 9.02 Term of Office: Term of office shall be one year, and all officers shall assume their responsibilities immediately following the election. the first day of the month following their election. (ie if election is in March, new officers assume their duties the First day of April)

Add - 11.02 Any member in good standing with the society may propose changes to the By-laws by written request to the Board of Directors. Such requests will be acted upon within sixty days.

Add - 11.03 A majority vote of all Board of Directors in attendance shall be required to recommend the By-laws change to the membership for approval and will require a majority vote of the general membership in attendance to be fully accepted.

Things That You Can Do With That Flash Drive

by Ira Wilsker

With the demise of the floppy disk, and the approaching demise of the CD disc for data purposes, the USB flash drive has become the de facto method of saving and transporting files between computers. These small USB drives are known by a variety of monikers, such as flash drive, pen drive, pin drive, and thumb drive. Since their introduction a few years ago, their capacity has increased, and their prices have plunged, they are readily available in the big box stores, discount stores, club stores, and online. The most recent ones I purchased for the holidays were 8 gig size (almost the equivalent of the data stored on 2 standard DVD

discs, about a dozen CD) discs, or about 5700 floppy disks), and cost under \$15 each. In the after-Christmas sales, some 8 gig flash drives were advertised for \$9 each (after rebate), this amount of non-volatile storage for the price was inconceivable just a few years ago. I thought I was getting a bargain a few years ago when I bought my first flash drive, a 64mb Lexar, for \$49, and now a drive with about 64 times that capacity is about one-fourth the price! I have coworkers and students who wear their flash drives on cords around their necks, where they are referred to as "geek heads."

Most of us use the drive simply for portable storage, the ability to carry files around with us, but in reality these flash drives can do much more than to simply be used for storage. Most of the USB flash drives on the market today comply with the USB 2.0 standard for high speed transfer, while there still are a few inexpensive, low capacity drives that are of the slower USB 1.1 speed standard or only about 3% of the speed of the USB 2.0 drives. From a practical viewpoint, the user will not notice any significant difference in speed if small files are saved and read, but will notice a difference if large files are used.

There are some other standards for USB flash drives that many users may find beneficial, if their flash drives have the capabilities. Users of Microsoft Vista (Home Basic, Home Premium, Business, and Ultimate versions) may find it advantageous to purchase flash drives that are labeled as "ReadyBoost." According to Microsoft, Windows Vista introduces Windows ReadyBoost, a new concept in adding memory to a system. You can use non-volatile flash memory, such as that on a universal serial bus (USB) flash drive, to improve performance without having to add additional memory "under the hood." If the drive is compatible with the ReadyBoost

standard, some of the flash memory in the drive can effectively and temporarily be added to the RAM (memory) installed in the computer, with an improvement on performance. If the Vista user with a compatible flash drive right clicks on the flash drive letter displayed under "My Computer" or Windows Explorer, and then left clicks on Properties - ReadyBoost, Vista will recommend how much of the available memory on the drive can be effectively and safely utilized by Vista. Other data stored on the ReadyBoost drive is protected from damage, and will not be harmed if the drive is used as a ReadyBoost drive. Because of the higher performance requirements, ReadyBoost compatible flash drives are slightly more expensive than standard drives, but are often the least expensive way to add memory to a Vista computer. Another useful feature often found on a USB flash drive is known as "U3." Drives that are U3 compatible are labeled as such. A U3 powered flash drive allows the user to carry special versions of hundreds of programs on the flash drive that can be run directly from the flash drive without being installed on the computer. This is an effective way to carry the actual software the user is familiar with, and run it on other computers. When unplugged from the computer, U3 leaves no data or other information left on the computer that was used. Some of the popular programs that come in U3 formats are the Firefox browser, Skype telephone, McAfee Antivirus (about \$15), Roboform Password Manager, OpenOffice (the comprehensive suite of office software including a Microsoft word compatible word processor, spreadsheet, presentation program, database, and more, free), Thunderbird email client, and dozens of games. Most U3 drives come pre installed with password protection and a "U3 Launchpad" which is a menu driven directory of the software on the U3 drive.

For those of us who have standard non-U3 drives, there is now an alternative that provides for the same functionality. This alternative to U3 that will run an almost all contemporary flash drives is called "PortableApps," and can be found online at <http://portableapps.com>. According to the PortableApp web site, "A portable app is a computer program that you can carry around with you on a portable device and use on any Windows computer. When your USB flash drive, portable hard drive, iPod or other portable device is plugged in, you have access to your software and personal data just as you would on your own PC. And when you unplug the device, none of your personal data is left behind." Dozens of portable apps are available, including the Firefox browser, OpenOffice office suite, antivirus software, games, password managers, and many other pieces of software. The PortableApp Suite is totally free, and does not contain any spyware or adware. In addition to the bundled suite, there are many other programs available, almost all free, which will run as portable apps. The PortableApp web site keeps a running tally of new software that is available, including new releases and versions, as well as beta (pre-release) software. A simple click will install the selected software on the flash drive.

Now that many of us are routinely carrying flash drives, it is nice to know what they may be capable of doing much more for us than just transport data.

WEB SITES:

<http://portableapps.com>
http://u3.sandisk.com/download/Download_no.asp
<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windows-vista/features/readyboost.asp>
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Juice Your Broadband Speed

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People prefer broadband internet connections because of the obvious speed advantages over dial-up and satellite links. Then why is it that broadband never seems to be fast enough? Are you getting the speed promised by your ISP? Broadband can cost \$100 a month or more, but does the provider really provide the advertised speed? Is the connection reliable or does the modem need a reboot several times a day? Fortunately, there are ways to achieve high, reliable throughput without having to have an engineering degree. Here are some suggestions to get every bit per second possible from your modem without any technical hiccups or interruptions in service.

Start with your computer and TV equipment. A common source of line noise can be traced to improper grounding of anything that plugs into household electrical circuits. This can seriously degrade performance of cable equipment. Every electrical device, especially those in the same room as the cable modem, should be plugged into properly grounded outlets. The best connections are with polarized plugs oriented in the correct direction, and please don't use any three prong to two prong adapters. Get up-to-date gear. Electric outlet testers are cheap. Buy one and use it to test for excess voltage on your cable wiring. Any problem could indicate a serious safety hazard.

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Engage a licensed electrician to fix it.

Almost anything manufactured today in the consumer electronics world is light years ahead of its predecessors manufactured only two or three years ago. Cable modems are no exception, so if yours is more than three years old get a new one from your provider. Most providers will make a free exchange, but some will require an extension of your contract. You want to do this because the latest modems conform to the DOCSIS 2.0 standard. This offers higher upload and download capabilities and supports other advanced broadband applications, including online gaming and peer-to-peer computing.

Ask your ISP if they automatically update firmware for the modem. If they don't, have them supply the website address of your modem's manufacturer so you can download the most recent firmware. Check the website about twice a year for new updates.

Next, go to a test site such as PC Pitstop, and check your upload and download speeds to see if they match the terms of your service contract. If they don't, give your ISP a call and have them reset the modem's settings. While you're at it, have them check the signal-to-noise ratio. Too much noise can cause interference, and your modem will then have to resend information cutting down on your throughput.

It's possible that your cable wiring may contain too many splices or simply be too long. That can be fixed by a visit from your ISP technician. Have the technician check the line quality leading to your house. If the signal is good and you're having problems, the house wiring may be the culprit. The definitive answer for cable modems is to create a split directly after the junction box and then run a new cable directly to your modem. The other side of the split will take care of your television sets which aren't nearly as sensitive to line noise.

After you've done everything from a hardware and firmware standpoint, and your cable connection is as clean as possible, you're ready to fine tune the system for best performance. Vista users don't have to do much of anything to optimize the operating system since Vista does TCP stack tuning dynamically. Any internet performance adjustments can be made through the browser. Firefox users may want to try Firetune or Fasterfox. They are both free utilities and allow adjustment to cache memory, capacity and other settings such as pipelining.

If you do a lot of downloading, you can save time by installing a download manager like Flashget. This widely used utility claims the highest number of users on the internet. It uses MHT (Multi-server Hyper-threading Transportation) technique. It's very easy to use and comes with exceptional document management features. Best of all, it's free.

After all this work, it would be a tragedy if you didn't keep in mind that sometimes the simplest solutions are the best ones. Most cable modems and routers have reset features. Many a mysterious internet ailment has been corrected simply by resetting the equipment. Turn off the computer and the modem. Unplug the modem for a few minutes and then power everything back on. You may be pleasantly surprised.

Tech News That Affects Everybody

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Some of us scour the technology and business sections of the news-

paper and the Web to get the latest news. Some of us head for the lifestyle and community sections, without much of a care about technology. Yet, today's technology news is often news that will affect everyone's life in one way or another.

Let me give you a few examples. The Pope recently announced opening of the Vatican YouTube channel

(www.youtube.com/vaticanit) which will feature short video clips of Pope Benedict XVI's activities and links to news and information about the Catholic Church. The Pope is posting two or three videos each day. Most are short clips showing the Pope's speeches, activities, and participation in important events. In a recent speech, the Pope praised the Internet as offering rich opportunities for dialogue, friendship and spreading the Christian message.

There is a lot of irreverent stuff on YouTube, but the Pope's participation shows how mainstream this popular video website has become. YouTube, FaceBook, MySpace, and other social networking websites have become more and more popular. If you haven't yet visited any of these, YouTube is a great place to start.

(www.youtube.com)

Another recent news announcement was the Palm Pre, which is a smartphone that will be available in a few months through Sprint. You might think that this is just another phone, and you would be right. But the implications for cell phones are quite dramatic. Palm has developed a totally new version of the operating system for this phone. Google now has their own cell phone operating system as do Microsoft, BlackBerry, and Apple. These are some pretty big name and you will notice that the software that runs these phones is called an operating



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

system. That's because these phone are really mini-computers that can do email, surf the web, and perform many other functions. Cell phones are changing dramatically. They are turning into handheld computers that will change the lives of those who use them.

We also should not overlook Apple's recent announcement that they will be dropping the DRM (digital rights management) for all songs in their iTunes store. The DRM crippled the songs so they had limited use. For instance, they could only be played on a certain number of devices or be copied a certain number of times. So music lovers the world over will be rejoicing to see that by April of this year, all of iTunes 10 million songs will be DRM-free. There is one caveat. Those who have previously purchased music and/or videos on iTunes that included Apple's DRM will now have to pay to get the DRM removed. Apple will be charging 30 cents a song. iTunes has sold six billion songs since going online in 2003. They did not offer any DRM-free music until recently. So most of those six billion songs had DRM. If every purchaser pays Apple 30 cents for taking away the DRM, Apple would make \$180,000,000. A boon to Apple, a pain-in-the-rear for honest music lovers who previously used the iTunes store.

Microsoft was also in the news recently with their announcement that the beta testing version Windows 7, their next operating system could be downloaded and tried for free. Their website was inundated by curious Windows users. So many came, that they had to add more servers and download services.

They originally said that they would limit the downloads to 2.5 million, but recently removed that restriction and will continue to offer the beta trial until February. Don't think that you will be getting something for nothing, though. The beta of Windows 7 will stop being functional on August 1, 2009. At that

time you will either have to reinstall your previous operating system or pay for Windows 7.

Last but not least in the technology news is the announcement that Western Digital has created a 2 terabyte hard disk drive. Believe it or not, this may have one of the biggest effects on individual users. As we can store more and more digital data at reasonable prices, more and more data will be digitized. We are already living in a digital world, but that world gets more reliant on technology every day.

SIGNIFICANT BITS

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On Software Installations

I received as a Christmas gift Ahead's Nero 9 – a CD/DVD burning suite with some authoring and backup tools as well. I have a combination of software pieces already on my laptop that in some way do some or all of what Nero 9 claims it can do. However, the promise of having all these tasks integrated into a single package seemed appealing, so I decided I'd give it try. I had also recently reinstalled my copy of Nero 6 on my downstairs PC and was pleasantly reminded how much better I liked Nero 6's interface, so this was another push to try Nero 9.

The Nero 9 installation took 45 minutes on my laptop. One colleague mentioned that maybe I should have tried the install with my antivirus software turned off to speed up the process. Except for operating systems, I'm curious why a software package would take 45

minutes to install in this day-and-age of high-speed processors and drives.

Nero 9 is much more involved than Nero 6 and similar versions, where Nero 9 includes media players, some authoring tools, and looks like it will replace the need for other software items. In my case, my laptop had separate programs already for viewing DVDs and authoring DVDs/VCDs.

Remember when installing any software, and especially anything that's a "suite" to make a restore point first and backup your system. I'd also recommend if the install left some installation related files, to keep those around, since some software titles need the leftover installation files to uninstall themselves.

First impressions of Nero 9 are that it will extensively "hook" into the Desktop environment, changing file extension associations, and adding context-menu options. For myself, I'm more fond of applications that do not touch the registry and or are "portable" in nature, so Nero 9 has already a bad score in my book before I've even done anything with it yet. While the installer gives options for which components and templates to install, there is no expert mode to prevent Nero 9 from messing with the file extensions. Also, Nero 9 claims some file extensions that are common or else used by another application.

Opera Mini and Palm TX Part II

You'll recall I had mentioned previously about using Opera Mini on my Palm TX. After a month or so of usage, I'm finding that it works okay most of the time, but it is not really optimized for different networks. In one instance I had to delete all the scanned entries for other Wi-Fi hotspots so that it would stop trying to logon to my distant and not present work network. So currently, I only use Opera Mini on my TX for home

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use, and the Blazer otherwise. Be forewarned, having installed the particular Java layer and Opera Mini, my Palm TX has tended to crash more when using Opera Mini or Blazer.

Editing Just About Anything

Something I find somewhat irritating when trying to help another computer user with a problem or task is when the person really has not taken the time to learn their software or operating system from a navigational perspective. I can tell they do not know the software well if they do not use the keyboard and/or keyboard shortcuts. (These keyboard shortcuts are also referred to as "hot keys" or "key combinations", and so on.) This is where the person helping, such as myself, says, "Please get out of your chair and let me drive." If you use a computer and do not know your hot keys, read on.

The mouse and graphic desktop are great at giving people quick access to files and a shorter learning curve for applications. However, if someone's primary way to interact with a computer is by way of the mouse, then they may likely take longer to do a task, especially spreadsheet work. The reality is that people are capable of typing (keyboarding?) faster than they can point-and-click (or speak), menu diving or clicking around the screen at teeny-tiny hieroglyphs that may-or-may-not be a link.

A quick way to learn all the key combinations for your desktop and applications is to go cold-turkey and simply to take the mouse off of the computer, have a list of shortcuts and go from there. Here are some hot keys in Windows XP that are pretty common to help get you going. (Check your manuals and or on-line for your particular desktop, application and operating system if different.)

Ctrl-Esc - Start Menu
Alt+F4 - Close

window, application, or Windows itself

F6 - Select or highlight whatever is in the location field, if present (browsers, directories)

F1 - Show help

Ctrl-F1 - Hide help

F2 - Rename a file (Windows and many applications using the standard open file dialog)

Ctrl-c - Copy selected area into the 'Clipboard' aka the buffer

Ctrl-v - Paste from the Clipboard (buffer)

Ctrl-z - Undo last action

One of the reasons I think laptop manufacturers get away with their unique (and thus horrid) keyboard layouts is that most people never take the time to learn how to use the control key in combination with the page keys, arrow keys, and home keys. If people used the navigational keys and hot keys more, I'm guessing the random placement of these keys on laptops would not occur. (Pet peeve: Control keys not being the outermost key on the spacebar row.)

The other thing to consider is that the availability of hot keys are what make local applications so much easier to use than Web applications. Below are some links that list more Windows XP keyboard shortcuts.

LINKS

Keyboard Shortcuts for XP
<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/301583>

Excel 2003 Keyboard Shortcuts
<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel/HP052037811033.aspx>

Sean N. Henderson is regular contributor to DACS.doc. More information at <http://seannhenderson.net/dacs.html>.

Sandbox Computing

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I spend a lot of my time surfing the web looking for research material; computer tech sources, genealogy data, vocal music and other information. This means that I am downloading many web pages, clicking on many links and generally opening up my computer to all types of malware. I always have to be aware that there are many traps on web pages that are just waiting for the unwary surfer. It used to be that having an up-to-date virus checker, a working firewall and parasite scanners, you could adequately protect your computer.

That changed to some degree when the "drive by" downloads appeared. Now with the constant appearance of "holes" in the Windows operating system (XP & Vista) and the various web browsers, it is less obvious that you can protect your computer from unwanted visitors. Microsoft recently (October 22, 2008) released an out-of-cycle patch (patch 958644) for Windows for what has been described as a very serious opening that could be exploited regardless of the browser you are using. There have also been recent articles on "clickjacking". In this situation "buttons" or links are floated behind the link you think you are clicking. The only option to prevent this is to disable JavaScript. That creates more problems as JavaScript is a very important part of the whole web experience and is used on almost every page. So when you do know that you can run a script and when you can't? Well, the "Sandbox" may be a way to surf safely and avoid the installation of

malware on your computer without having to disable JavaScript.

My Sandbox experience is based on using the software application "Sandboxie"

(www.sandboxie.com) with Windows XP and Firefox 3.0. As with everything related to computing, your results might be different. Sandboxie is a very small program, approximately 450 KB. So it is quick to download and doesn't require a lot of memory to run.

Next, let's take a look at what is meant when I talk about a computer sandbox. The sandbox is a complete "virtual computer" running in your computer's memory. This virtual computer is isolated from the real operating system files and creates any files it needs for use within the sandbox. When the sandbox closes, everything in it disappears unless you chose to keep it. It's like having a bank vault within a building where everything can be locked within the vault and nothing is removed without special permission. The neat thing is that nothing that happens within the sandbox can have any effect on your computer. This means that Trojans, rootkits and other malware have no chance to affect the operation of your computer outside of the sandbox. If a problem occurs when you are running in the sandbox, all you need to do is shut it down, you are returned to your normal computer operations and the malware is erased.

When Sandboxie is started it creates a sandboxed folder which contains a drive folder, user folder, and Registry "hives". The "hive" is Microsoft's term for collections of related Registry keys stored together. The parts of the Registry needed for sandboxed operations are stored in a hive which is then integrated into the Registry. There are also instances of Windows services stored within the sandboxed folder that can be accessed by applications running within the sandbox. These are referred to as "process objects" and are needed for normal operations. When the sandbox is running

there may be instances of these objects running both sandboxed and non-sandboxed. Also, you can run an application within the sandbox at the same you are running it outside the sandbox. The complete operating system is not loaded into the sandbox. This reduces the memory required for the sandbox operations.

Applications running in the sandbox can not hijack non-sandboxed programs. Therefore they can not operate outside the sandbox. New files or other created objects have a path assigned by Sandboxie which directs them into the sandboxed folders. Sandboxie prevents any programs running inside the sandbox from loading drivers directly. It also prevents programs from asking a central system component, known as the Service Control Manager, to load drivers on their behalf. In this way, drivers, and more importantly, rootkits, cannot be installed by a sandboxed program. This is one of the features that prevents rootkits from being installed outside the sandbox.

In actual operation, using Sandboxie is very simple. To make it even simpler, there is a short tutorial available on the Sandboxie web site. This can be accessed from within the program the first time you run it or directly from the Sandboxie home page by clicking on the "FAQ & Help" link.

After installation it can be set to load whenever the computer is started. This puts an icon in the system tray. Clicking on this icon brings up the Sandboxie Control Center. This window lists all sandboxed applications and object. When I started it, the window indicated nothing was sandboxed. So, using the menu I selected run an application and then selected Firefox. This changed the list in the window to show Firefox as well as the two RegHive files. With Firefox up, I did my usual web surfing. Along the way I received a message from Sandboxie that a new version was available that I could download. At this point, I really couldn't tell that

anything was different from my previous surfing experience with Firefox. So I went to the Sandboxie page and downloaded the new version. After finishing I closed the Sandboxie Control Center. Then I went looking for the download so I could install it. Well, it didn't exist anywhere on the hard drive! I had closed Sandboxie without marking the update to be saved! As a result the download was deleted, along with all the other sandboxed files when I closed the Control Center. So I opened the Control Center, restarted Firefox and downloaded the update. This time I selected it to be saved before I closed the Control Center. Then I was able to install the update.

I should also point out that now I have an icon on the desktop which automatically runs Firefox sandboxed. Sandboxie can be set up to isolate your browser automatically whenever you open it. To do so, add the name of your browser's executable file, such as firefox.exe or iexplore.exe, to the list of programs Sandboxie always opens in a sandbox. If you don't do this, Sandboxie will not set your browser to open automatically in the sandbox.

As you can tell from these comments, Sandboxie does not require a reboot to start the sandbox process. Sandboxie does sandbox access to files, but not to the complete hard drive. It does sandbox access to registry keys. It also sandboxes access to many other classes of system components, in order to trick the sandboxed program into believing that it isn't being tricked. So you can open and close Sandboxie repeatedly while you are using your computer without having to do any rebooting.

If this discussion has interested you and you would like to take Sandboxie for a test run, the free version can be downloaded from: www.sandboxie.com. This application is free for personal use. However, there is a Pro version available for \$30.00. If you like the

—continued on next page—

program and can afford it, buy the Pro version. This software is the work of one person, Ronen Tzur, and this payment is his means of support to continue working and improving this software. After some experience in running Sand-boxie, I can highly recommend it as an excellent method of protecting your computer from malware. :

*Dr. Lewis is a former university and medical school professor of physiology. He has been working with personal computers for over thirty years, developing software and assembling systems

Quick Tip

by Erin

Vista Startup Sounds

So, tell me , are you a new Windows Vista user? Or maybe you've been using it for awhile now. either way, do you like the way the Vista operating system sounds when you boot up your computer? You know, it plays that little song for you. All the Windows operating systems do it, but that doesn't necessarily mean we have to like it, right? Well, if you're one that doesn't care for the whole intro song type of thing, there is a way you can shut it off. Want to know how? Then read on.

I know you all know that you're very lucky when it comes to this kind of thing, because originally, there was no way to turn this sound off in earlier versions of Windows. But, now with Vista, there is, so we might as well take advantage of it, don't you think? Alright, to turn off the startup sounds that Vista makes, click on your Start button and in the search box below it, type in the word "sound" to create a search query for it.

When your results come up, find the one that simply says "Sound" and click on it. Next, choose the Sounds tab. From there, look to the bottom of the box and uncheck the option that says "Play Windows Startup Sound". When you're fin-

ished, click Apply and OK. That's all there is to it! Once you do this, you won't have to hear all those "sometimes annoying" sounds that play while your operating system is starting up. How great is that? Give it a try today!

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Access Point, Wireless Keyboard and Mouse Donated to QCS

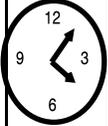
The Quad-Cities Computer Society wishes to thank Dale Wells of Computer Repair Center for donating an access point ,a wireless keyboard and mouse.

Computer Repair Center

872 Middle Road
Bettendorf IA 52722
PH: 563-359-0042
Fax: 563-359-3411

www.computer-repair-center.com
dale@computer-repair-center.com

QCS Meeting Dates

Sun	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Fri	Sat
1 Mar	2 Mar 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcowell@mchsi.com	3 Mar March 2009	4 Mar 6:30 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcowell@mchsi.com	5 Mar	6 Mar	7 Mar 
8 Mar	9 Mar 7:00 PM Internet SIG Ted Huberts 309-792-9470 slowhand54@sbcglobal.net	10 Mar  Purim	11 Mar 5:45 PM Beginners SIG * 7:00 PM Main Meeting Remote Computing	12 Mar	13 Mar	14 Mar
15 Mar	16 Mar 7:00 PM Genealogy SIG Len Stevens 563-359-9672 judylenstevens@msn.com	17 Mar St. Patrick's Day	18 Mar 7:00 PM Digital Media SIG Norm Dunlap 309-798-2304 normdun@gmail.com	19 Mar	20 Mar SPRING!	21 Mar
22 Mar	23 Mar 7:00 PM Windows SIG Larry Stone 309-787-5574 lstone521@mchsi.com	24 Mar	25 Mar	26 Mar	27 Mar	28 Mar
29 Mar	30 Mar	31 Mar April 2009	1 Apr 6:00 PM QCS Board Dinner Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcowell@mchsi.com	2 Apr	3 Apr	4 Apr
5 Apr	6 Apr 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcowell@mchsi.com	7 Apr Purim	8 Apr 5:45 PM Beginners SIG * 7:00 PM Main Meeting	9 Apr	10 Apr	11 Apr

***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
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		Membership Level	
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Individual	\$30	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family	\$40	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

QCS Meeting

Wednesday
March 11, 2009
7:00 PM

Remote
Computing
Helping Each Other
with Don Singleton