

QBITS

Quad-Cities Computer Society
Newsletter for September 2009
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Wednesday
September 9th
7:00 PM
*Digital
Scrapbooking*
www.creativememories.com
presented by
Sheri Baker

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

This Month in *QBITS*..

Beneath the Surface!.....	2
Cyber News!.....	3
Vista Ultimate Raffle.....	4
Broadsides.....	4
Foxit Reader.....	5
Googlepedia.....	6
If Your Computer Gets Wet...What?.....	7
OpenOffice.org 3.0.....	7
Windows 7 XP mode.....	9
SIG-nificant Bits.....	10
Tid Bits.....	10

Views and opinions expressed
by presenters
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of the Quad Cities Computer Society

Monthly meetings are open to the
general public.

QCS Review Facebook

thecreativitypipeline.com

presented by
Rachel Piper
Deb Verber
Jason Verber

by Joe Durham

The World of Facebook is becoming the Internet Bulletin board. Originally designed as a form of communication for college students, it has grown users of all age groups. Rachel, Deb, and Jason came to the QCS to peel back the mystery of this growing social network. Using this new interface Rachel and Deb described how we can search out family, friends, old friends and make new friends across the electronics pathway.

Deb guided us through the Facebook registration. When you get to the Facebook page and setup a new account, she suggested that you put in your real name. If you don't, you will not be found on Facebook and you will have defeated the purpose of connecting to other people with this tool. Several tab fields of personal data are requested. Deb said that it up to you to include how much to share. Even if you entered much information, Facebook has tools by which you can restrict who can see all of the information that is provided. Since this is a social networking device the more information and interests you share the more Facebook will be able to match up friends that share your outlook and connections.

For example it will request your birthday, High School, College, Political view, Religious view. Even as Facebook searches its database for matches, it is you who will make the decision to either add or ignore any friends that Facebook offers as connections. Once your profile has been created you will be asked for a password.

As you establish you profile Facebook will offer to use various tools to create friends suggestions: your email addresses, your school history, instant messenger list. At each stage you have the choice to let Facebook search these areas or you can decline.

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



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Rachel and Deb related that it is easy to get lost in the Facebook world, there are many options and places to view. Click Home and you will be returned to your starting page which is divided into three areas. On the left side is your Personal information. The middle panel is what is called the *Wall* where you or any of your friends can offer comments, photos, links, or videos to your Facebook. The right panel contains friends suggestions that Facebook has generated based upon your Profile and interests.

Clicking the name or photo of one of your friends will direct you to their Facebook page which has the same orientation. You can write something on their Wall. On the left panel below their photograph you can send them a private message.

As you go through this process each day and as your friendship network grows, you will see postings on your page from friends and associates. These basic interactions are just the beginnings. Many people have used the Photo Album feature to share pictures with friends and family.

In Facebook you can also set up an event that will be sent out to all of your friends. You can even ask for an RSVP from them. Rachel and Deb reminded us that if you create an electronic event, be sure to contact your friends that do not use Facebook in a non-electronic way otherwise you can leave someone out of the mix.

Groups can be created among your Facebook friends also: family, church, or clubs. The possibilities are endless. The nexus of personal interaction in Facebook is quite extensive with the tools that are available online.

In addition to these basic features, Rachel and Deb stated that there are several applications that make fine timewasters and are enjoyable. There are many games on Facebook, some of the more popular ones are : Mafia Wars, Farm Town, Poker, and Scrabble. All these op-

tions are meant to generate more social interaction between friends on Facebook.

Another method of social interaction are Quizzes, and Polls. You can create or participate in quizzes and polls to generate new interests, postings and interactions in Facebook as well.

Rachel and Deb said that the information overload at first glance in Facebook can be overpowering, but they encouraged new users to stick with it and navigate around as they use the system each day. In time these features will become useful tools as you refine and explore your Facebook experience, add to your friends list and offer your place to the Internet world. Deb offered that caveat of common sense that reminds us that Facebook is a public medium, so don't say anything on it that you would not say publicly in any other regular setting.

Drop by Rachel and Deb's blog thecreativitypipeline.com where their QCS presentation notes will be posted online for easy reference. Decide today to broaden your Internet experience by trying Facebook facebook.com. You will be surprised by seeing many old friends, classmates, and acquaintances that share Facebook. The QCS would like to thank Rachel and Deb for their fine presentation and for Jason's apt direction at the computer.

Beneath the Surface Deep Peeping the Web

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Last summer Google announced it had passed the one trillionth mark in its list of known and searchable Web pages.

If you think Google does the best job of searching the World Wide Web you will be in for a big surprise. By 'big' I mean a search engine that goes way beyond standard search engines like Google, which only look at the surface of the Web compared to the vast, deep, and so far uncharted depths of the Web. I say "you will be in for a big surprise" because a deeper search engine is only in its initial research stages.

Standard search engines only skim the surface of the Web. Kind of like you're looking over the surface of the ocean, instead of looking into its vast undersea life. The plan is to create a search engine that will open 90% of the Web to searches.

A study at the University of Utah is trying to find a way. The study searches typed text rather than the hyperlinks that the present search engines use. A beta version of DeepPeep is available at: www.deeppeep.org/.

We have a long way to go but eventually almost the entirety of the Web will be searchable. Web pages exist already that tell you the best taxi fare, flight schedules, and shopping catalogs. DeepPeep wants to give you access to this information. A whole new way of searching has to be worked out first.

Scientists have said that 90% of what we know was discovered in the last 50 years. DeepPeep is working out a way to get that knowledge to you.

Cyber News!

gary.stanley.net/cyber_news.htm

gary-stanley.blogspot.com/
by Gary Stanley
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Last month Firefox released version 3.5 of their popular browser. As mentioned before, I have used this browser for a long time and much prefer it over Microsoft's Internet Explorer for features, security, and performance. It's free, so if you would like to try it, it's a simple download tinyurl.com/y3prgo and installation.

Some of you probably took advantage of Microsoft's offer, last month, to pre-order Windows 7 at less than half price. You'll receive it by mail on or about October 22nd. That's also when you will be able to buy a new computer with Windows 7 pre-installed. Pre-orders of Windows 7 far outnumbered that of Vista's, but the heavy discount probably was a contributing factor. I see positive results for Windows 7 compared to all the negativity about Vista.

When you purchase a new computer, should you buy an extended warranty? That's a great question and one that has puzzled many. Most sales people will use scare tactics when you purchase anything from a vacuum sweeper to a new automobile and pressure you into an extended warranty. Personally my answer has most always been no with one possible exception. Most appliances will be warranted for a year and my theory is that if something is to go bad it will happen within that time.

When it comes to computers, 90% of the problems that you will incur will be software related and that is seldom covered by extended warranties. Sales people make a commission when selling these policies and it is a huge profit maker for companies. The one exception that I mentioned would be a laptop computer. Replacing parts on a laptop are much more expensive than on a desktop. A desktop keyboard can be replaced for as little as \$10, but the keyboard on a laptop might set you back a couple of hundred. There's always a chance of dropping a laptop and

that's when that warranty would come in handy. Probably a worthwhile investment for that going off to college son or daughter. If you consider an extended warranty be sure to read and understand what you are paying for!

Another reminder about virus alerts. If you get a pop up message that says your computer has a virus, make sure the message originates from protection programs that YOU have installed. If it's from anyone else it's a scam! Don't fall for these false pop-ups that try to scare you into taking action. Usually the alert message sounds very alarming and asks you to click on an icon on the task bar to remedy the problem. When you click there it will offer a free scan. When the scan is finished it will tell you that you have umpty ump problems and they will fix them for \$49.95. Don't fall for this. Instead run the programs I have outlined in "System Maintenance."

tinyurl.com/5bs7zz

In all my seminars over the years I usually talked about the proper way to clean your monitor screen. A large percentage of computer users are now using LCD flat screen monitors and they require even a little extra care. Here tinyurl.com/nab94d you'll find exactly the method you should use. Cleaning the inside of the screen is a little more complicated, but easily accomplished. tinyurl.com/2pzegg

Most of us have a printer or printers attached to our computers. A good percentage of us have purchased printers on the retail cost factor alone, but should you be looking for other factors as well? Is your present printer stealing from you? More from PC World.

tinyurl.com/laqmy

Are you a Netflix subscriber? For a small monthly fee Netflix will send you unlimited movies in the mail. No late fees, and you can keep them as long as you wish. What a deal and we have done this since receiving it as a Christmas gift last year. This has been fun, but

—continued next page—

just got funner! (I know there's no such word, but you get the idea.) I recently ordered a Roku www.roku.com/ digital video player, a small black box that connects to our big screen TV. Now get this! It connects to my wireless router and we can watch thousands of movies over the Internet for the same price that we are already paying. It was a very simple set-up and we were ready for the popcorn in no time. The performance and quality were outstanding and I'm more than pleased. I'm not being compensated in any way for this endorsement, I just believe in passing along anything that works great that you might enjoy.

Want a pretty good home alarm system for free? Home security systems can be expensive but here's one that won't cost you a penny. Place your car keys next to your bed at night and if you hear someone in the house, simply press the panic button to sound your car horn. If your auto is in the garage or parked outside this would surely scare away any intruder!

Keyboard Tip: Holding the CTRL key on your keyboard and tapping the Z key will undo the last or the last few things you did in almost any program.

We are in the heart of summer. Hot temps, thunderstorms, floods, and tornadoes are the norm especially in the Midwestern states. How would you like to be the engineer on a train and have a tornado chasing you? See who wins!

tinyurl.com/nfyoo7

You may have seen this by now as it has made it's way around in emails. It's a commercial from a mineral water company, and is a testament of the graphics abilities of today's computers! Check it out.

tinyurl.com/lsw9m

Photo Tip of the Month: Photography is the art of using light. Good lighting is the key for great portrait shots. That doesn't mean you have to spend a fortune for lighting equipment. Placing your subject in front of a window is a

good way of using natural light. More from Digital Photo.

Taking photos of wildlife is exciting. My wife and I have ridden our all terrain vehicle almost 6,000 miles in the wilderness of the Southwest. Often we will travel at only about 5 mph hoping to sneak up on some form of wildlife. We have seen Elk, deer, wild turkeys, coyotes, wolves, javelinas, diamondback rattle snakes, lizards, and giant tarantulas. Often times I scurry to grab my camera for a photo. One day, while riding among the tall pine trees of northern Arizona, we spotted a herd of Elk and zoomed in for this picture.

tinyurl.com/mekfz4

One animal that I have never seen though is a white deer. In fact I didn't know there was such a thing until I saw this report tinyurl.com/d9ykuw from a TV station in Wisconsin. Very interesting.

Check out my photos that I've taken from around the world. You'll find over 1,100 pictures in 38 different galleries. New pictures have been added to the Odds n Ends, Misc. Outdoor Shots, Camping, Photo Effects, and People galleries. We have had over 235,000 views on our Photo Site.

www.pbase.com/gary_stanley

Maybe it's time to do a CTRL-ALT-DELETE, with our lives. If something stops performing on our computer we can do that to bring up a list of tasks, find the one that is not responding and clicking on "End Task." We all have something in our lives that we would like to stop. Perhaps it's smoking, being unfaithful, looking at porn on the Internet, or just not living up to our full potential. Run a virus check on your life and eliminate what it finds! The next step is to get involved with something outside of yourself. Volunteer one weekend at a soup kitchen for the homeless, clean out your closets and your garage and give stuff that you don't use to charity. You will never be a

whole person until you give. End the bad and start the good!

Vista Ultimate Raffle!



The QCS is raffling a copy of Vista Ultimate that the Microsoft Corporation generously donated to the QCS. Raffle opportunities are :

\$1— One ticket

\$5— One arm length of tickets

\$10—One length of tickets
finger tip to finger tip

If you are not present at the drawing your name and phone number must be written on the back of the ticket.

Good luck to the future winner!

Broadsides

Compiled by Ron Broadhurst
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The Space Coast PC Journal,
June 2009

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Dear friends,
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

TURN OFF INDEXING TO SPEED UP XP

Windows XP keeps a record of all files on the hard disk so when you do a search on the hard drive it is faster. There is a downside to this and because the computer has to index all files, it will slow down normal file commands like open, close, etc. If you do not do a whole lot of searches on your hard drive then you may want to turn this feature off:

- Open My Computer.
- Right-click your hard drive icon and select Properties.
- At the bottom of the window you'll see "Allow indexing service to index this disk for faster searches," uncheck this and click ok.
- A new window will pop up and select Apply to all folders and subfolders.

It will take a minute or two for the changes to take affect but then you should enjoy slightly faster performance.

CORRECTING SYSTEM HANG AT STARTUP

If your system hangs about 2 or 3 minutes at startup, where you can't access the Start button or the Taskbar, it may be due to one specific service (Background Intelligent Transfer) running in the background. Microsoft put out a patch for this but it didn't work for me. Here's what you do:

- Click on Start/Run, type 'msconfig', and then click 'OK'.
- Go to the 'Services' tab; find the 'Background Intelligent Transfer' service. Disable it, apply the changes & reboot.

CHANGE THE START MENU STYLE TO CLASSIC

Does the new Windows XP Start menu take up too much space on your desktop? You can easily change the look back to the Windows Classic Start menu by following these steps:

- Right-click the Start button, and then click Properties.
- Click Classic Start menu.
- Click the Customize button to select items to display on the Start menu.

By default, selecting the Classic Start menu also adds the My Documents, My Computer, My Network Places, and Internet Explorer icons to your desktop.

DISPLAY YOUR QUICK LAUNCH TOOLBAR

- Right-click an empty area on the taskbar, click Toolbars, and then click Quick Launch.
- Easy as that your Quick Launch bar appears.
- To add items to your Quick Launch toolbar, click the icon for the program you want to add, and drag it to the Quick Launch portion of the taskbar.

KEEP YOUR FAVORITE PROGRAMS NEAR THE TOP OF THE START MENU

Do you have a favorite program that you frequently use? Elevate its priority on the Start menu by putting it at the top of the list. This ensures that the program will remain on the Start menu and cannot be bumped by other programs, even if you use the others more frequently.

Right-click the link to your favorite program on the Start menu and select Pin to Start Menu. Your program will be moved permanently to the top part of the list, just below your browser and e-mail programs.

CHANGE OUT YOUR POINTER SCHEME

Tired of seeing your pointer as an arrow or an hourglass all the time? Windows XP offers a number of alternative pointer schemes, such as Dinosaur, Ocean and Sports:

- Open the Control Panel, double-click Mouse, and select the Pointers tab. (If you start in Category view, select Appearance and Themes, then click Mouse Pointers under "See Also").
- Next to Schemes, click the down arrow and select a scheme to preview its pointers. Click OK to apply the scheme to your desktop.

CREATE A PERSONAL SCREEN SAVER

For a great way to put your digital photos to work, try creating a slide show presentation for use as a screen saver.

- Right-click an empty spot on your desktop, and then click Properties.
- Click the Screen Saver tab.
- In the Screen saver list, click My Pictures Slideshow.
- Click Settings to make any adjustments, such as how often the pictures should change, what size they should be, and whether you'll use transition effects between pictures, and then click OK.

Now your screen saver is a random display of the pictures taken from your My Pictures folder.

Foxit Reader: A Short Review

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A Worthy Alternative to Adobe Reader

When one of my clients was concerned about hacker threats to Adobe Reader last winter I went in search of alternative software. I found the free version of Foxit Reader at www.foxitsoftware.com/pdf/reader/

It's well worth a look! Here are just some of the advantages:

Small Size. The file is about one-sixth the size of the latest free version of Adobe Reader and takes seconds to download and install. The small footprint is great for older computers or those short on hard drive space. There is also a U3 version for flash drives.

Speed. It starts up fast and runs fast. No delays while splash screens load. Printing is also speedy.

"No surprises." Foxit Reader will remind you of Adobe Reader—same interface, menus and toolbars so the transition is painless.

Open multiple files in tabbed format. If you like the ability to open several web pages on tabs in Mozilla Firefox you'll like the tabbed format of Foxit Reader as well. View several PDF files at a time and switch between them easily by clicking the tabs.

Mark up and leave comments on PDF documents. You can insert text boxes with comments right in line with text in the PDF document or draw arrows and graphics or highlight text. This is very helpful, especially when you are collaborating on a document with others.

Take it for a test run. You will not be disappointed.

Googlepedia

A review

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This book is the greatest! If you are interested in anything Google, this is the place to go to find out about it.

This is a Que book, the 3rd edition, by Michael Miller, who is a prolific author for Que. He's written some 80 non-fiction how-to books, mostly about computer-related subjects.

The book has over 700 pages, including a comprehensive index, a very complete Table of Contents, 46 chapters and 3 appendices.

I suspect that a 4th edition is not far off, because Google is constantly developing new tools that you will want to know about.

The best known Google tool is the Web Search engine. In the olden days, say five years ago, there were several search engines, all of which produced a list of results that contained many duplicates and may not even have produced something useful to you.

Google took a new approach to produce search results that do not have duplicates, are up-to-date and are sequenced by probable usefulness to you. They do this by the following process:

Periodically, usually every few weeks, their GoogleBot crawler searches the web for each page, tracks every link in the page and saves a copy of each page it encounters on its servers.

Google creates an index to each of the saved pages, storing every important word on each page.

Once a search of the pages is complete, the results are ranked by methods known only by Google.

The rankings are displayed on the search results page in order by what is likely to be the most important to you, to the least likely. There are many techniques to making a successful search, and these are described fully in the book. Using quotes or operators can signifi-

cantly improve the accuracy of your search.

What's most interesting, though, is all the other services provided by Google. I suspect you, like me, are not aware of many of these:

GOOG-411. Search for businesses by voice from your cell phone. Dial 1-800-GOOG-411 to try it out.

Google Desktop. Create a home page environment that has just what you want on it.

Google Docs. Word processing, spreadsheet and presentation documents on the web, sharable with others.

Google Earth, Sky and Mars. Tools to explore these areas.

Google Gmail. An email portal.

Google Groups. Create and join specific discussion groups.

Google Maps. View maps and driving directions.

Google Notebook. Store web information you come across.

Google Reader. Display articles and headlines from blogs and RSS feeds.

Google Scholar. Read and search scholarly journals and articles.

Google Transit. Plan your trip using public transportation.

Google News and Web Alerts. Be advised of new material that meets your criteria.

And more...

Each chapter tells you about a Google service and how to use it. Each description is described simply to begin with, but continues with more details about how to make use of special features. You can easily be an expert user of any of their tools through this book.

All of these services came out of the Google Labs, which is essentially an R & D facility. It is constantly on the search for new, useful tools for users. One recently announced service is Google Voice that gives you free phone calls



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

within the US, but also forwards calls to your cell phone and land line and transcribes voice messages into email.

I found this book fascinating, because it opened my eyes to all the things that are available from Google. It will take me some time to learn about the ones in which I'm interested.

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If Your Computer Gets Wet...What?

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What to do if something wet spills on your electronic device or it falls into wet whatever?

The following is not guaranteed but represents years of experience.

Quick, unplug it! Unless there is a likely shock hazard. Look up the instructions (best to do this when you buy it). Find out if there is any prohibition against using ALCOHOL. Alcohol can dissolve some materials.

There are generally two items to have handy. One is *distilled* water to first wash off and dilute any spill, especially anything that might be conductive. The second is alcohol, 90+% isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol. Ethyl alcohol or ethanol - 90% - will work too. Alcohol has an affinity for water. Rinsing the item first with the distilled water and then

with alcohol will dilute, pick up water, carry it away, and evaporate quickly. The higher percent alcohol 90% vs 50% have a greater affinity for water.

Time is important. You do not want water to soak into an otherwise insulating medium, especially water that contains something conductive like salt. It will leave a conductive residue that will short out portions of the device. That is why you want to *rinse first* with distilled water to carry away any conductive residue and then the alcohol to remove the water film. *Most tap water has dissolved minerals* that remain after the water evaporates, hence the distilled water to rinse these away.

After, and I repeat AFTER, the above cleaning, you can use *very modest heat to help dry out* the item. You can use a hair dryer at some distance. Make sure you don't heat the item any hotter than is comfortable to hold. Some plastic materials deform at relatively low temperatures.

Remember the order: (1) rinse with distilled water (2) rinse with alcohol (3) *warm gently* with hair dryer or warming oven.

For items immersed in flood waters, the above approach can be tried but the outlook is not promising. Generally the conductive flood waters have had time to soak into the various insulating materials and are almost impossible to remove. Still, it may be worth a try, especially if you have the time and possible success is worth the effort. Distilled water and alcohol are not very expensive. Most circuit boards are coated with varnish to resist moisture. In this case, wash repeatedly with distilled water. Use a soft brush to remove any remaining film such as mud. Then, the alcohol followed by the dryer. Using the dryer prematurely can "set" the offending material to the point that it may be almost unremovable. So save it for the very last step after you are sure things are clean. Your efforts may save part if not all of the equipment.

Bob Schwartz is a HAL-PC member, retired EE, 14 patents, technical writer, active in civic affairs: President, Brays Bayou Association; Vice President, Marilyn Estates Civic Association; Correspondence Secretary with the Willow Waterhole Greenspace Conservancy.

Open Office.Org 3.0

An Evolutionary Improvement
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OpenOffice.org (OO.o) is Free and Open Source Software's (FOSS) premier alternative to the Microsoft Office productivity suite. It offers a high level of compatibility with many of the ever-changing MS Office formats, provides many of the same features as MS Office, and works similarly to MS Office. This month, we will explore the recently released OpenOffice.org 3.0, which is available for Microsoft Windows, Linux, Apple's Macintosh, Sun's Solaris, and several other operating systems. Many, if not most, users of MS Office who require the broad, deep range of features of MS Office could change to OO.o and become productive after a very shallow learning curve.

If your requirements are more for just compatibility with Microsoft's Word document formats in a word processor, you can consider more streamlined FOSS alternatives such as AbiWord.

OO.o is a full-featured office productivity suite comprised of six integrated applications: the Writer word processor (which also has a Web page editing mode), Calc

—continued next page—

spreadsheet, Draw graphics program, Impress presentations program, Base database program, and Math equation editor.

OO.o 3.0 is an evolutionary improvement on the application suite, with new features, enhancements, and user interface improvements. Users of Apple Macintosh OS X systems benefit greatly from OO.o 3.0, which will now run as a native OS X application.

OS X users will also have support for Microsoft's VBA macro language and the Calc Solver component, which allows solving optimization problems where the optimum value of a particular spreadsheet cell has to be calculated based on constraints provided in other cells. Both of these features are missing in MS Office 2008 for Mac OS X.

All users of OO.o 3.0 benefit from its improvements, including the two above. Another area of significant improvement is one where OO.o is breaking out of Microsoft mimicry mode: support for open document standards. OO.o 3.0 supports the latest OpenDocument Format (PDF) specification. In fact, ODF is the OO.o default document format. ODF is gaining wider acceptance worldwide, being adopted by more companies and governments as the standard for documents, and becoming supported by an increasing number of applications. OO.o will also read and write many other formats, including those of various versions of MS Office and Word, plain text, and several PDA document formats.

Additionally, it will read the newest formats introduced in MS Office 2007. Exchanging documents with users of Microsoft's products should not be an issue. The Writer screen now sports a handy zoom slider control, making it quick and easy to change the zoom level of the view. Additionally, it will automatically display multiple pages of the document as the zoom level is lowered. Writer now displays notes

— notations added to a document that are not necessarily meant to be printed — at the edge of the editing window to the side of the document, making it easier to read them and see their context in the document. In addition, notes from different users are displayed in different colors, together with the editing date and time, facilitating collaborative work on a document.

Calc sees some useful improvements. One is in the charts feature. Now, custom error bars can be included, and regression equations and correlation coefficients can be displayed right in the chart. Another is a new feature, spreadsheet collaboration through workbook sharing. This feature allows multiple users to work collaboratively on a spreadsheet while avoiding editing conflicts. The users share a spreadsheet, each adding their data. The spreadsheet owner can then easily integrate the new data with a few clicks. And Calc now supports 1,024 columns per worksheet.

Draw now lets you crop images the same way that most other graphics programs do, by dragging handles located at the edges and corners of an image. This same improvement appears in Impress, too. Additionally, Impress now natively supports inserting tables into presentations. Tables can be added directly into the presentation and edited within Impress as native Impress objects.

Improvements affecting the entire suite include a new set of icons, expanded feature support when exporting to XML, and a new gateway to the suite called the Start Center, which makes it more intuitive to get to where you want to go in the suite.

There is nothing revolutionary in OO.o 3.0. What is new are several improvements and enhancements that will keep the suite in contention with its competitors. And we have not touched at all on the features OO.o already had before 3.0. If you need a productivity suite with both a broad and deep set of

features and, particularly, if you are not married to Microsoft Office, you should give OO.o a look. It costs you nothing to try, you may just like it, so it just may save you hundreds of dollars.

XP Utilities

Written by Warner Mach, Editor of the SEMCO DATA BUS, newsletter of the Southeast Michigan Computer Organization

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This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

I have discovered that Windows XP is chock full of various utilities to solve various kinds of problems. Some of the utilities that I have occasion to use in recent months:

(1) **Windows Task Manager**
You bring up the Windows Task Manager by holding down cntl-alt-delete. Some of the useful features are: (a) Go to the applications tab. This shows the running tasks and is useful for ending a task that refuses to go away. (b) Go to process tab. This shows all the miscellaneous tasks in the system and shows the CPU time that each is using. This can frequently be useful when you are not sure what the system is doing. (c) Go to performance tab. This shows the use of resources. Especially useful is the dynamic graph of CPU usage.

(2) **Event Viewer**
The Event Viewer has a log of recent events, including events at power up and power down. This was of value to me when I was attempting to learn about certain messages that were appearing at power down time. Under the 'application' and 'system' tabs the logs are listed. To get more detailed information on a particular prob-

lem, double-click on the 'type' portion of a particular entry. This will give some keyword search hints that can be typed into Google. You bring up the Event Viewer by going to start=>run and typing 'Eventvwr.msc' into the box => OK.

(3) System Configuration Utility

The tab that was useful to me was the 'startup' tab. These are tasks that automatically come up at startup. By unchecking groups of entries (and saying 'apply' and then rebooting) I was able to zero in on one particular entry that was causing a problem. You bring up the System Configuration Utility by going to start=>run and typing 'msconfig' into the box => OK.

(4) Check Disk

This utility checks the space usage on the disk. It also checks the control block chains to be sure that they are correct. Go to start=>all programs=>accessories=>command prompt and type in 'chkdsk.' If the program detects bad command chains and you want to correct the situation then type in 'chkdsk /F'. This command may require a reboot during which it runs stand-alone.

Useful Resources

There is a useful list of utilities, with examples and explanations at: <<http://tinyurl.com/9um8or>>. There is also information about the Microsoft '906569' update at: <<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/906569>>.

This update "... adds the tools tab to the System Configuration Utilities in Windows XP Service pack 2." But even if you don't want to do this, there is a list of useful utilities with an explanation of their function.

Windows 7 XP Mode

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This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

I will be writing a review of Windows 7 in due course, but here is a preview of a key feature that will interest many readers.

Windows XP Mode

Windows XP Mode is aimed at small business users who wish to run their Windows XP-era applications on their Windows 7 desktop. They might have avoided upgrading to Windows Vista owing to an incompatibility with their old programs or the simple reason of "Windows XP does the job." However, as they buy new computers later this year or by January 2010, they might find a copy of Windows 7 included with the purchase, or they may have other compelling reasons to upgrade.

An exciting optional feature that was kept under wraps until recently was Windows XP Mode (XPM). This feature will work in certain editions but is an additional download.

Key Facts

- Windows XPM is included with Windows 7 Professional, Windows 7 Ultimate and Windows 7 Enterprise customers.
- Windows XPM combines Windows Virtual PC and a pre-installed virtual Windows XP environment to enable users to run many older applications.
- Windows Virtual PC enables users to launch virtual applications from the Windows 7 Start menu.
- Windows Virtual PC includes support for USB devices and is based on a new code base that includes multi-threading support.
- Windows XPM is preconfigured with the Windows XP firewall and can apply updates automatically from Windows Update. It is not pre-configured with anti-virus or

anti-malware software, which need to be sourced separately.

IT Professionals

Windows XPM is not recommended for corporate deployments. Wait for Microsoft Enterprise Desktop Virtualisation (MED-V) Version 2.0, which will be released as a beta 90 days after the general availability (GA) of Windows 7.

- MED-V v1 is currently available for Windows Vista and it enables Virtual PC deployment in larger organisations. It provides centralised management, policy-based provisioning and virtual image delivery.

- MED-V v1 builds on Microsoft Virtual PC 2007 to help enterprises with their upgrade to Windows Vista when applications are not yet compatible.

- MED-V v2 will add support for Windows 7 (both 32 bit and 64bit) and Windows Virtual PC.

Windows XPM is for SMBs

Windows XPM stand-alone is intended for small and medium business (SMB) users who can install their XP applications themselves and who might not have IT Professional staff. Each PC has its own virtual Windows XP environment that is controlled and managed by the user.

Windows XPM is best suited for older business and productivity applications such as accounting, inventory and similar software. These applications tend to conform to the basic Windows Application Programming Interface (API).

Windows XPM not for Consumers

Windows XP Mode does not have 100 percent compatibility with all Windows XP software. It is not aimed at home users because many consumer programs require extensive use of hardware interfaces such as 3-D graphics, audio, and TV tuners that do not work well under virtualisation today.

In Use

Windows XPM is available from the Windows 7 Start menu. It displays a regular Windows XP desktop and you can install your old software from there just as you would on a Windows XP machine. Thereafter, those programs appear just below the Windows XPM menu item.

Requirements

Of course, there's always a catch. Not all CPUs will support Windows XPM. You need hardware-based virtualisation (go and check your CPU specs now). Intel and AMD have CPUs that have this feature but don't assume all recently purchased CPUs support hardware virtualisation. See these sites for more information.

- Intel: www.intel.com/technology/virtualization/
- AMD: www.amd.com/us-en/0,3715_15781,00.html

My PC is about six months old and has a Core 2 Quad processor - the Q6600 chip. I checked this Intel page to confirm that I'll be able to test this feature when I get my hands on it:

- ark.intel.com/cpu.aspx?groupId=29765

The next thing to check is for BIOS support on your motherboard. I have an Asus P5K SE/EPU and its user guide mentions Vanderpool support is enabled by default (you can turn it off). Vanderpool was the code name for Intel Virtualisation.

While Windows XPM isn't for everyone, it will certainly address the need of some businesses that need to run legacy applications.

SIG-nificant Bits

All of the SIG vacations have ended :). The Kids are back in school and our regular SIG schedule returns. Please consult the QCS website qcs.org and the *QBITS* calendar. Contact your SIG leader if

Officers 2009-2010

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you have further questions. Note: No Windows Sig in September.

Tid Bits

Nikon's COOLPIX.S 1000pj is a new digital camera that also serves as a projector. Check it out at www.nikonusa.com.

Everyone is thinking green nowadays. Join the revolution and turn off the electricity. Check out the new power saving apparatus at www.tricklestar.com.

Interested in having something that is a little different or finding a gift for that hard to buy for. Look and see what you can find at www.thinkgeek.com.

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 Sep September 2009	2 Sep 6:30 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	3 Sep	4 Sep	5 Sep
6 Sep	7 Sep 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	8 Sep	9 Sep 5:45 PM Beginners SIG 7:00 PM Digital Scrapbooking	10 Sep	11 Sep	12 Sep
13 Sep	14 Sep 7:00 PM Internet SIG Ted Huberts 309-792-9470 slowhand54@sbcglobal.net	15 Sep	16 Sep	17 Sep	18 Sep	19 Sep
20 Sep	21 Sep 7:00 PM Genealogy SIG Len Stevens 563-359-9672 judylenstevens@msn.com	22 Sep	23 Sep	24 Sep	25 Sep	26 Sep
27 Sep	28 Sep 7:00 PM No Windows Sig Yom Kipper lstone521@mchsi..com	29 Sep	30 Sep	1 Oct	2 Oct	3 Oct
4 Oct	5 Oct 7:00 PM Microsoft Office SIG Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	6 Oct October 2009	7 Oct 6:30 PM QCS Board Meeting Judi McDowell 309-314-1780 jmcdowell@mchsi.com	8 Oct	9 Oct	10 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
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QCS Main Meeting

Wednesday
September 9th
7:00 PM
Digital
Scrapbooking
www.creativememories.com
presented by
Sheri Baker