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In this issue: *YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS - Vista Alternatives, Part II - Screen Shots*
Windows Vista for Starters: The Missing Manual - Upgrading to an LCD Monitor
Why You Need A Firewall - The New, the Best, and the Worst - Secure Your Flash Drive Cap
Clean It Off: To Defrag Or Not To Defrag - Comparing Vista-Compatible System Utilities
Chapter Reports - McAfee SiteAdvisor - Someone You Should Know

How & Why We Defragment Our Drives



JOURNAL OF THE CHICAGO COMPUTER SOCIETY

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Commentary and news about some of the articles and also our writers, along with related matters, all intended to make this journal more useful to you.

Greetings to all.

Each month we try to select a theme article and cover picture which we believe to be of current general interest. The “general interest” part is often tricky and we sometimes aim for large groupings. But nobody doesn’t use a hard drive these days and we should all be aware of the value of defragmenting those hungry critters. As they have become available over time in greater capacities at lower prices, the tendency is to keep feeding them data and let them figure out where to stash it. It’s what they do and they do it very well. Like any reliable friend on whom you can rely for faithful performance, they may go on without complaint but with increasing strain. And they are not immortal. Give them a break and yourself some rest. Time was when you could watch those charming data placement charts jump their little vertical lines around as they defrag the ten, twenty, forty or so megabytes of precious info. But now it’s in gigabytes, less perceptible, and boring. So you may want to read the cover article, set up the defrag, and do something somewhere else. You’ll both benefit.

The article described above and a large share of our other material now come from sources outside CCS since we get less local material than some years ago. The ma-

ior portion of our outside material comes from our membership in the Association of PC User Groups (APCUG). Since it is a group of organizations much like our own, one might view it as an extended family with similar experiences whose views and articles bear strong relevance to our own interests. Indeed, we share our own articles with APCUG and one price of such success is that we have a few of our own back in the APCUG distribution, therefore a somewhat smaller group of articles from which to choose for our journal, lest we repeat ourselves (sometimes a temptation to bestow it twice).

The other main outside source is our free access to the magazine content of Sandhills Publishing, who produce *Smart Computing*, *PC Today*, and eight other publications. They provide a rich source of authoritative material and we dip into it as we need or feel appropriate. So we are doubly blessed with access to material outside our own.

This month our local sources have provided the usual internal material, like our calendar of CCS meetings, CCS Board meeting minutes, announcements, and notable member introductions, plus some book reviews and a chapter report. Additionally, we have some photos from our Mini Expo V, as a reminder of the coming sixth, MX-

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Association of Personal Computer
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Contact our CCS Administrator,
Beata Kernan, at
(708) 588-0385 for a membership
application.

VI, in September, for which planning is well under way since it takes about a year to set up each subsequent event of that scale.

Might I again request consideration by CCS potential authors of whether they'd like to contribute an article on their PC-related experiences or views, or a digital camera photo for our Share a Photo feature, or some actual assistance to a heavily understaffed staff here. If so, the next step is sending your contact query to the e-mail address above. ■ (TOC)

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how-to guidelines • software critiques
questions and answers • book reviews*

Table of Contents

Click on a title below to go there. Clicking on TOC at the end of an article will return here.
Click on a Web address displayed in an article to go to that address

Here @ Hard-Copy <i>Managing Editor, with his review of contents.</i>	<i>Charlie Sickels</i>	2
YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS <i>Meet Mick Hedrick.</i>	<i>BEATA KERNAN</i>	5
Windows Vista for Starters: The Missing Manual <i>Review of an introductory manual for Vista.</i>	<i>Tim Kekeis</i>	6
Vista Alternatives, Part II <i>Serious Linux fan gives limited encouragement.</i>	<i>Brian K. Lewis Ph.D.</i>	8
Screen Shots <i>One way to print your screen.</i>	<i>David Garcia</i>	11
Upgrading to an LCD Monitor <i>Advice and options in a recommended move.</i>	<i>Herb Goldstein</i>	12
The New, the Best, and the Worst <i>Thoughts on robots and robotics.</i>	<i>Pim Borman</i>	14
Why You Need A Firewall <i>The whys and hows of why, if you were not already convinced.</i>	<i>Brian K. Lewis Ph.D.</i>	16
Someone You Should Know <i>About Larry Tetzloff.</i>	<i>Jane Smith</i>	18
McAfee SiteAdvisor <i>Short free app does advance scouting for security check of potential website visits.</i>	<i>Sandy Berger</i>	19
Secure Your Flash Drive Cap <i>Three ways, if you want to.</i>	<i>Fran Damratowski</i>	20
Clean It Off: To Defrag Or Not To Defrag <i>Yes or no; how and why.</i>	<i>Thor Schrock</i>	21
Comparing Vista-Compatible System Utilities <i>Utilitlies compatible with Vista are described and compared.</i>	<i>Tracy Baker</i>	25
Downtown Computer Club <i>Meeting for Mar.21, 2007</i>	<i>Allen Kapusta</i>	29
CCS Board Of Directors <i>Board meetings of Mar.17 and Apr.21, 2006.</i>	<i>Mick Hedrick</i>	30

BOOK REVIEW

Windows Vista for Starters: The Missing Manual

Paperback, published January 2007 by O'Reilly Media; \$19.99. CCS members receive a discount if you follow the link in the Members Only area on the CCS Website.

O'Reilly Media publishes at least eight books in the Missing Manuals series which Pogue created to fill the needs of new software owners facing bare bones instructions and the last resort Help feature within the program from the original CD.



BY TIM KEKEIS
CCS MEMBER

Because of the gravity of a whole new operating system like Vista, or complex apps like *Word*, *Access*, *Powerpoint*, or *Excel*, the series approaches each of these subjects at two levels. The concise, more elementary but sufficient level is termed "For Starters". This one is for those just starting or novices with a windows-based PC and the new Vista operating system. If you have some experience, this helps you figure out the new environment without being too technical. This is an inexpensive

For More



Vista Alternatives – Part II



This article is being written in the Linux version of Open Office 2.0 on a computer that uses Ubuntu as the operating system (OS). Since this system is now networked with my Windows XP computers, both desktop and laptop, I

by Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.
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I can easily transfer files between the computers. I am also able to print from this Linux computer to my laser printer over the Windows network. So what did I have to do to accomplish this?

The first thing I had to do was to install a copy of Samba on this Linux computer. Ubuntu has an Add/Remove graphic interface for the Synaptic Package Manager. This has a one-click download install for new applications. The Samba package that was installed had a GsambaD graphic front end. This turned out to be very frustrating as it insisted I had to be logged in as Root to run the application. Now with most Linux versions this would be a simple change of user. Root is usually the designated Administrator and is the only user allowed to alter system files and add/remove software. There is also a user that has fewer privileges. (Sounds somewhat like Vista doesn't it?) However, in Ubuntu, the user is also the administrator. To carry out any functions that require administrator privilege, the OS asks

For More

Chicago Computer Society Purpose

The Society is an education and information service organization dedicated to expanding knowledge, understanding, and the use of microcomputers by individuals and professionals.

The purposes of the Society are to operate exclusively for charitable, scientific or educational purposes, in the course of which operation and in furtherance thereof:

TO PROVIDE its membership with timely, accurate, and practical solutions to microcomputer productivity problems.

TO ATTRACT and help educate new microcomputer users, and to retain and learn from experienced, knowledgeable users.

TO SATISFY the information needs of its membership.

TO BE a recognizable force in the industry so that Society opinions may positively influence future microcomputer products.

Mark your calendar for the upcoming MX-VI Mini Expo Sept 15, 2007 At Prairie State College



MX-V Revisited



Screen Shots, or How to catch Your Computer in the Act

Have you ever wanted to print out what you see on your monitor screen? This is called a "Screenshot," and there are several software packages on the market that allow you to do just that with various degrees of sophistication. If you don't need that sophistication you can easily use Windows to get a screenshot. Just follow these instructions:

- 1) Press the Print Screen Key (PrtScr) on the keyboard.
- 2) Click Start, then click Run.
- 3) Type "mspaint" (without the quotes) in the Run box and click OK.
- 4) In Paint, click Paste in the Edit menu.
- 5) Click Print Preview in the File menu. If the screenshot is cut off, you may want to change the printer setting to print in Landscape mode.
- 6) Click Print and close Paint. You're done!

You can also save the file if you like.

- 1) Click "Save" in the File menu.
- 2) Browse to the folder you want to save the file in so that the folder name is in the "Save In" box.

- 3) Type a file name for the screenshot, use JPG in the "Save as Type" box and click Save.

**By David Garcia, President,
Little Blue PC Club,
Northglenn, Colorado**

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There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you. ■ (TOC)

CCS Help Line Is it possible

that you might find yourself able to help some of our members in any computer related area of your choosing?

Contact:

Beata Kernan - Administrator/Treasurer
708-588-0385 or ccsadmin@bigfoot.com

Share your knowledge

Upgrading to an LCD Monitor

Actually, I was happy with my high-quality CRT (cathode ray tube) monitor. It was with considerable reluctance that I recently decided to get with the modern era and upgrade to an LCD. It has been quite a learning experience. Looking back, I realize that there are a number of very important practical considerations of which I was unaware in making the change and in making a choice.

Perhaps I can pass along a summary of them along with some insight gained by hands-on experience to make the experience a little easier for you than it was for me. You need to do your homework both before and during your investigation. Here are some of the most important things you should know.

An LCD monitor offers considerable advantages in upgrading from a CRT. It is infinitely lighter and takes up much less desk space than a CRT. It uses the smallest fraction of electricity by comparison and is devoid of radiation concerns. When properly installed, its display may prove brighter, sharper and provide superb color.

SIZE: In any size range, an LCD will display more viewable screen than a similarly sized CRT. I decided on a 19 incher, the size of my CRT that I was happy with. Seventeen may work for you if that's what pleased you on your CRT. Over 19 for average use is both too much screen and excessive cost for most people.

ORIENTATION: Most prefer a normal tall screen (portrait view) for average usage. Wide (landscape) screens are available at greater cost in the same size range

For More

by Herb Goldstein
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The New, the Best, and the Worst

March, 2007

I, Robot?

Robots have come a long way in the past 85 years or so. The first "Robot" appeared in a Capek play in 1920 as an artificial worker. The word was derived from the Czech "robota," meaning labor.



In the 1940s and '50s Asimov created the intelligent robot R. Daneel Olivaw, indis-

tinguishable in looks and behavior from humans. Asimov did not specifically equip his robots with computer brains since computers were still thought of as fancy calculators and Artificial Intelligence had not yet been defined. That happened during the 60s, and the computer HAL 9000 in Clarke/Kubrick's 2001 Space Odyssey became a famous example of a computer with an intelligent brain, seemingly capable of using its own free will.

To this day artificial intelligence remains an unresolved problem. The question remains to what extent a computer will ever be able to simulate the workings of a biological brain. Although they are sometimes called electronic brains, computers have nothing in common with biological brains. Electronic computers are binary digital, in that the basic elements can only be "on" or "off." A biological brain is analog and its basic elements

For More

SOFTWARE REVIEW

Why You Need A Firewall

When you connect your computer to the Internet, you have opened a door which invites any other computer in the world to come in. Actually, you have more than 65,000 doors into your computer, any one of which may be open. That is, unless you have taken steps to keep these doors closed. That is the purpose of a firewall. The firewall filters the information packets that show up at your “door” or computer port as we usually refer to it, and can either prevent them from entering or pass them through.



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When your computer connects to the Internet, it is assigned a numeric address or IP (internet protocol) address. These addresses are a 32 bit number. They are usually written out in four groups with periods between each group as follows: 111.11.11.111. Traveling over the Internet are many programs that simply look for unprotected IP addresses. The IP address of any unprotected computer is sent back to the originator who can then upload a trojan or spyware package to that address. The originator can then take control of the computer or the application will record keystrokes and send all recorded information back to the program originator.

Although your computer has one IP address there are many different ports on your address. There are different ports for different purposes on your computer. Your connection to the Internet is usually through port 80. This is referred to as the HTTP (hypertext transfer tions

For More

McAfee SiteAdvisor

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



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

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

To use the *SiteAdvisor*, www.us.mcafee.com, you simply download the free program. The program is very small, so it downloads and installs quickly and it doesn't slow down your Web surfing.

For More

Clean It Off: To Defrag Or Not To Defrag?

How & Why We Defragment Our Drives

by Thor Schrock



It might surprise you to find that the data that appears to be so neatly organized inside files and folders on your computer is actually more jumbled than a bucket full of Scrabble letters.

While a computer's hard drive is very precise in remembering where it has stored your data, it does tend to store it in some strange places from time to time. Unlike a neatly organized filing cabinet, your computer breaks up large files into smaller file fragments tailored to fill the first available free spaces on your hard drive.

This process of saving file fragments in the first available slot on your hard drive forces your computer to work harder to read an entire file from start to finish. Because the computer must work harder to read a particular file or program, it takes more time to complete even a simple task, such as sending an email. Organizing these scattered file fragments into contiguous segments on your hard drive is called defragmenting.

Reorganize Your Hard Drive

To better understand the concept of defragging a hard drive, imagine picking up today's newspaper and reading a front-page article. After a few paragraphs, you are asked to turn to another page to continue reading the story.

Diskeeper's defragmentation software can defragment files that the Windows Disk Defragmenter cannot work with because they are in use.

It takes some time to open the paper, turn to the proper page, and find the story to continue reading. Now, imagine that you are required to move to a different page after each paragraph of the story. It would take a lot more time to read the fragmented story than it would have if the story was printed on a single page.

For More

CCS Help Line

For Members Only.

You can get help with your computer needs by going to the CCS web site in the members only area.

Click CCS Help Line.

An OS Unleashed Comparing Vista-Com- patible System Utilities

by Tracy Baker

One of the downsides of a new Microsoft OS (operating system) is that system utilities fine-tuned for previous editions of Windows don't tend to work well—or at all—with the latest OS. Even small changes in file systems, Registry settings, and other aspects of Windows that utilities like to tweak can render the utility useless, and then there are the programs that just plain refuse to work with Vista at all.

Several of the top utility suites are now available in Vista-compatible versions, but you really need to know what you're getting into before settling for one of them. Some focus more on security than on utilities, others that worked great under Windows XP aren't fine-tuned enough to be of great use in Vista, and then there are those that are simply too powerful and dangerous for Vista beginners to cut their teeth on. It's a bit like Goldilocks and the three bears, but as long as you know what type of porridge you prefer, we have some great recommendations.

Iolo System Mechanic Professional 7

\$69.95

www.iolo.com

System Mechanic Professional 7 offers a variety of security tools and system utilities in a single package. Although the main System Mechanic 7 utility serves as the core of the suite, you also get Iolo Antivirus, Iolo Firewall, DriveScrubber 3, and Search & Recover 4 out of the deal.

The system utilities worked well for the most part, but there were some inconsistencies. After the initial

For More

Downtown Computer Club



by Allen Kapusta

Meeting of March 21, 2007

The meeting of the Downtown Computer Club was called to order at approximately 6:00PM. Joe Vangsness moderated the open forum.

Thanks to National Louis University and Tracy Dennard for providing the room for this meeting.

Open Forum

Q. I installed Norton Utilities on my computer, but uninstalled it because parts of it stopped working. Now I cannot re-install it. I was trying to install it to use Norton File Compare.

A. Norton Utilities and Norton AntiVirus do not uninstall cleanly. Contact Symantec to get a program that will remove them. There are many file compare programs available on the Internet. Techtips.com is a good source for computer help.

Q. What should I use to backup my computer?

A. Store your backup off-site. The simplest choice is to backup to CD or DVD. Backup MyPC is a good backup program. Keep several copies of your backup off-site. Another solution for business continuity is to backup to an Internet backup server and restore to a laptop that has the software necessary to support your business.

Q. I had problems with my monitor. It displayed the message "out of range". A friend fixed the monitor problem, but I wondered what the message meant.

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Any way you look at it, your Chicago Computer Society membership is a great value! Membership includes access to CCS monthly *eHard-Copy* journal, discounts on our Education Programs, participation in our Special Events, and many other benefits. To join, **print** this page on your local printer, then **FILL IN THE BLANKS** and **MAIL** it in along with your check made payable to The Chicago Computer Society to "The Chicago Computer Society" PO Box 159 LaGrange, IL 60525-0159. **It will take approximately two weeks to process your** application and six weeks to start receiving your first issue of *Hard-Copy*, the Society's award-winning monthly journal. Thanks for your application and welcome aboard

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