

Nybbles & Bytes



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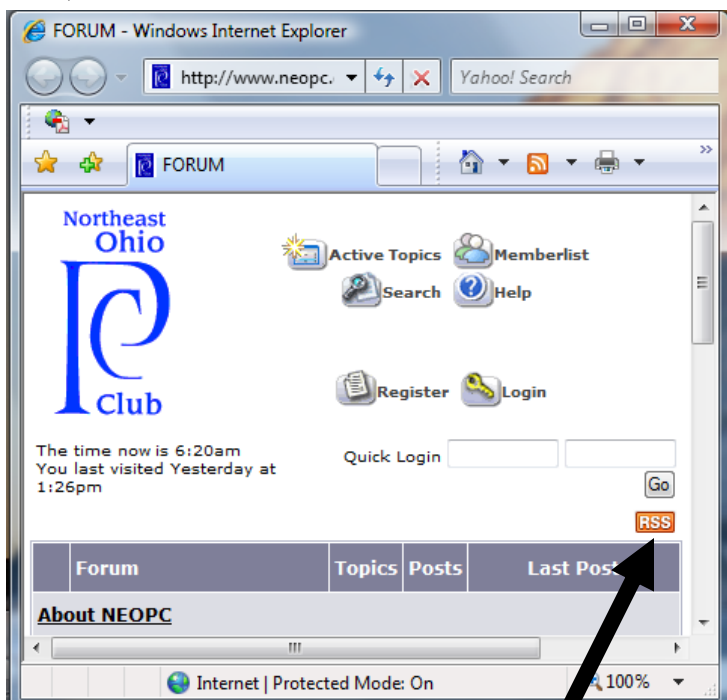
July, 2008 Volume 24, 10


President's Message:

By Dick Rose

And Introducing RSS


Does your Internet Explorer Browser look like this when you go to the FORUM (the newer version)?



I draw your attention to the  symbol above. The RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication. It is a technology using XML that allows web sites to syndicate web site content. Our FORUM administrator has enabled RSS Feeds so that you can "subscribe" to our site and keep up-to-date with the latest Posts or Calendar Events.

There are many ways you can subscribe to

one of the RSS Feeds available within the forum, by either; using a Web Browser that supports Live RSS Bookmarks (Firefox, IE7, Safari, Opera), using an online RSS News Reader, installing an RSS News Reader on your computer, or using an email program that supports RSS like Mozilla Thunderbird.

In the interest of introducing all our NEOPC members and Guests of our FORUM to the subject you are able to experience the initiation to RSS via our site. When you see the symbol  on any website you merely click on it and follow the steps to subscribe . . . FREE.

Try these sites:

- <http://www.reuters.com/tools/rss>
- <http://www.pcworld.com/resource/rss.html>
- http://www.usnews.com/usnews/rss_info.htm
- <http://www.neopc.org/forum/>

Gizmo Richard's Support Alert Newsletter 5.1

In late February AVG Technologies announced AVG V8, the latest incarnation of their popular anti-virus scanner. Version 8 includes fully integrated spyware protection, rootkit protection and web link checking of search engine results. It is yet another example of a former anti-virus scanner transforming into an anti-malware scanner, a trend I noted in last month's editorial column.

On April 24 the free version of AVG V8 was

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Through the Gates:

By David A. Vydra

Enter to the Trove of Bill's Treasures and Travails

A monthly column dedicated to revealing some of the unknown or lesser known features or foibles of the Microsoft line of products.

By: David A. Vydra

As promised, here is my take on Windows Live OneCare:

I used the Live OneCare "Beta" for several months prior to the initial release. I then upgraded to the final version and even paid a few bucks. After a bit more than six months of trial there is little to say. It works! How well, is really difficult to quantify. It just seems to be going about its business with hardly a hiccup. I have tested for open ports ala Zone Alarm and not a one to be found. Live OneCare augments the Windows Firewall by covering the inbound spectrum. But wait! There is more!

Windows Live One Care combines anti-virus, data protection and performance. This all-in-one program is ideal for individuals without much computer knowledge and makes all of its functions easy to use. With Windows Live One Care, you get a great anti-virus that protects you against all online threats as well as a tool that will keep your computer up to date and running smoothly. There are four main components to the software: Protection Plus, Performance Plus, Backup and Restore and Instant Support.

Windows Live One Care's Protection Plus ensures your computer is protected against spyware, Trojans, hackers and all other Internet threats. It's constantly running on your PC, scanning and making sure you are protected. With the constant threat of malicious content on the Internet, you want the top notch protection provided by Windows Live One Care. These are primarily your AV, Spyware and Firewall features. Note that you will have to uninstall any AV and Firewall products you currently have running. These will definitely conflict and cause any number of problems. You will be able to continue using any Spyware or Anti-Trojan product that you now have. If you currently have taken advantage of "Windows Defender" it will be incorporated into the Live OneCare process.

Windows Live One Care also includes Performance Plus, which is a set of tools for performing regular cleanups on your computer. The tools allow you to defrag you computer's hard drive, remove unwanted files or programs and update your machine regularly so that it's always running at top speed. Constant system up keep like this really does make a difference and Windows Live One Care does a great job of getting junk off your computer. If you use "Diskeeper" keep it. There are no conflicts unless you run their process concurrently. I have Diskeeper Pro so it does it's defrag on the fly 24/7. With the free version I recall that

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defrag has to be scheduled.

Windows Live One Care also includes a backup and restore option that lets you to do complete backups of your system in case your hard drive fails or your data gets lost or deleted. It can be setup as a regular process that runs daily, nightly or whenever you want and it backs up all of your important data to CD/DVD, external hard drive, network drive or pretty much wherever you think it is safe. This helps you to recover lost data, get your system back to normal if it crashes or just prepare incase something ever does happen to your computer. The best bet for this option is an external HDD setup as a mapped drive. The initial backup will take a long time. However, subsequent backups will only augment the original. In any event, schedule this process at an off hour.

But, you ask, are there any cons? Well, yes, sort of. I have not had a problem with any feature except for one. The Firewall! If you attempt to open an internet connection that is not previously approved, Live OneCare will block it. Then, a window will pop-up asking you to select an option. Approve the connection. Deny the connection for all time. Or, Deny the connection this time but ask me again the next time. Meantime, regardless of choice, the connection remains blocked. If you approve the connection you will have to restart it.

Windows Live One Care is a great tool that every PC owner should invest in. You can even try the program free for 90 days, and once you try it you're sure to want to purchase it. Luckily, it's a deal, costing only \$49.95 for three licenses - talk about a fair price! And yet, if you go to the right place at the right time, your cost will only be \$19.95. Bottom line is; "The job gets done!"

10 tips on how to help reduce spam

Applies to: Microsoft Office Outlook 2007/ Some of 2003

Follow these guidelines to help lower your risk of receiving junk e-mail.

1. **Take advantage of the Junk E-mail Filter in Microsoft Office Outlook 2007** Office Outlook 2007 helps to mitigate the problem of spam by providing the Junk E-mail Filter, which automatically evaluates incoming messages and sends those identified as spam to the **Junk E-mail** folder.

2. **Block pictures in HTML messages that spammers use as Web beacons** Office Outlook 2007 has an additional anti-spam feature. By default, this feature blocks automatic picture downloads and other external content in messages if the content is linked to a server. If you open a message that has external content when this feature is turned off, the external content downloads automatically, inadvertently verifying to the server that your e-mail address is a valid one. Your e-mail address can then be sold to a spammer. You can unblock external content for messages that come from sources that you trust.

Turn off read and delivery receipts and automatic processing of meeting requests Spammers sometimes resort to sending meeting requests and messages that include requests for read and delivery receipts. Responding to such meeting requests and read receipts might help spammers to verify your e-mail address. You can turn off this functionality. However, read and delivery receipts and automatic processing of meeting requests are useful features that you should not be afraid to use within a secure corporate network.

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Note Delivery receipts can be turned off only by your e-mail server administrator if in a corporate network.

Turn off read receipts

1. On the **Tools** menu, click **Options**.
2. Click **E-mail Options**.
3. Click **Tracking Options**.

Under **Use this option to decide how to respond to requests for read receipts**, **Only applies to Internet Mail accounts**, click **Never send a response**.

Turn off automatically acceptance of meeting requests

1. In Outlook, on the **Tools** menu, click **Options**, and then click **Calendar Options**.
2. Under **Advanced options**, click **Resource Scheduling**.
3. Clear the **Automatically accept meeting requests and process cancellations** check box.
4. **Limit the places where you post your e-mail address** Be cautious about posting your e-mail address on public Web sites, such as newsgroups, chat rooms, bulletin boards, and so forth. When visiting public sites, you might want to use an e-mail address that is different from your main e-mail address. Remove your e-mail address from your personal Web site. Whenever you list or link to your e-mail address, you increase your chances of being spammed.
5. **Review the privacy policies of Web sites** When you sign up for online banking, shopping, or newsletters, review the privacy policy of the site carefully before you reveal your e-mail address or other personal information. Look for a link or section (usually at the bottom of the Web site's home page) called "Privacy Statement," "Privacy Policy," "Terms and Conditions," or "Terms of Use." If the Web site does not explain how your personal information will be used, consider not using the services at that site.
6. **Watch out for check boxes that are already selected** When you shop online, companies sometimes add a check box that is already selected, which indicates that it is fine with you if the company sells or gives your e-mail address to other businesses (or "third parties"). Clear this check box so that your e-mail address is not shared.
7. **Don't reply to spam** Never reply to an e-mail message – not even to unsubscribe from a mailing list – unless you know and trust the sender, such as when the e-mail message comes from a service, an online store, or newsletter that you have signed up with. Answering spam just confirms to the spammer that your e-mail address is an active one.
8. **If a company uses e-mail messages to ask for personal information, don't respond by sending a message** Most legitimate companies will not ask for personal information to be sent in e-mail. Be suspicious if they do. Such a request could be a spoofed e-mail message disguised to look like a legitimate one. This tactic is known as *phishing*. If the possible spam appears to be sent by a company that you do business with – for example, your credit card company – then call the company to verify that they sent it, but don't use any phone number that is provided in the e-mail. Instead, use a number that you find by using other means, such as directory assistance, a statement, or a bill. If the request is a legitimate one, the company's customer service representative should be able to assist you. The Junk E-mail Filter also includes phishing protection to help

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identify and disable suspicious messages.

Don't contribute to a charity in response to a request sent in e-mail Unfortunately, some spammers prey on your goodwill. If you receive an e-mail appeal from a charity, treat it as spam. If the charity is one that you want to support, locate their telephone number or Web site to find out how you can make a contribution.

Windows Live OneCare features

With this new version of Windows Live OneCare, our aim was to help consumers better manage their home environment. Our research has shown that most homes now have approximately 2.5 computers. This means that in addition to securing and maintaining multiple PCs, consumers now need to do the extra work associated with connecting devices and securing networks. To ease this burden, features such as multi-PC and home network management as well as printer sharing have been added to OneCare to help address the needs of the modern home environment.

This new version also establishes a foundation to better fill the needs of small businesses. Many small businesses need to protect and maintain a number of PCs, but may not have the resources for extensive onsite IT support. To help solve this problem, centralized backup has been added to OneCare so local backup on a small business network is a simple step instead of a time consuming hassle.

Here's a quick overview of the new features added to OneCare version 2.0 to help keep users' PCs and networks safe, reliable, and performing well:

- **Multi-PC and home network management:** Helps ease management of multiple-PC environments by providing a single navigation bar for monitoring the security and maintenance of networked computers. Also enables one-click actions to resolve issues among computers within a home PC network.
- **Printer sharing support:** Makes it easy to connect printers to local networks so all users in the vicinity can use the same printer.
- **Start time optimizer:** Speeds PC boot time by removing rarely used applications from start-up menu. This helps to address one of the main areas of frustration for PC users as time goes on.
- **Proactive fixes and recommendations:** Windows Live OneCare constantly monitors the specific configuration of the user's system and makes proactive fixes and recommendations to improve the computing experience.
- **WiFi security:** Keep your home or small business wireless network safe with the new OneCare WiFi security feature.
- **Centralized backup:** Enables users to centrally configure and monitor backups for all PCs covered under the same OneCare subscription, with the data from all PCs backed up to a central location.
- **Online photo backup:** Keeps precious photos safe from theft or accidental loss by backing them up to a secure, offsite location in Windows Live (available to OneCare subscribers at an extra cost in the final v2.0 release).

As always, Windows Live OneCare takes the guesswork out of making sure your PC stays virus-free and working at its best. As a subscriber, you'll see why this simple and automated, always evolving, all-in-one service adds up to the best value for PC performance and security needs.

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released, and was promptly met with howls of derision. The free version excluded the rootkit scanner, active protection against hostile websites and a number of the other goodies added to the commercial V8 product. It also was proving to be very buggy.

Worse still, AVG announced that they would discontinue (at the end of May) the virus updates for the current V7.5 free version as well as their free anti-spyware and rootkit detection products.

I can fully understand user's disappointment with these announcements, but this is a perfectly normal commercial decision. AVG is, after all, a commercial organization, not a charity.

Their move does, however, present users of AVG's free software with a problem. Before the release of the V8, many AVG users employed an excellent security setup that combined the free version of AVG AV 7.5 with AVG's free anti-spyware scanner. With both these products being phased out, users are faced with a dilemma.

There are a couple of options:

Based on the evidence available as of today, I think the best route for free software users who want maximum protection is to switch to the free Avira AV [3] scanner and optionally, bolster this with the free Spyware Terminator program [4] or, less desirably, Windows Defender [5].

I say this because the free Avira product includes rootkit protection, while the free AVG does not. It is also more stable. Furthermore, Avira has better overall protection than AVG. Check out the AV Comparatives results [6] and you will see what I mean.

On the downside, Avira has limited active email protection, will nag you more than AVG free and the interface is somewhat more crude. But the overall level of protection is excellent.

Another option which offers a tad less protection but greater convenience is to switch to the free Avast! scanner. The latest version of Avast!

is a major improvement on what was already an impressive product. And the free version includes anti-spyware, anti-rootkit and email protection, so you don't need to use it in concert with another product.

On the downside Avast! is resource hungry. Subscriber Basil Irwin pointed out that "not counting pseudo-drivers, Avast! consumes around 70MB of memory compared to 8MB for AntiVir. I didn't do any formal testing of CPU consumption or timing of various common operations, but there was no doubt in my mind that Avast! noticeably slowed several common operations, like program loading and file copying."

For average users with modern PCs I suggest the low hassle Avast! Option, while higher risk users may be better off going with Avira.

You could, of course, just stick with AVG 8 Free, and bolster your defenses with other products. However, there have been too many V8 "bug" reports to suggest this is an attractive option at this point in time.

1. <http://www.grisoft.com/ww.90627>
 2. <http://free.grisoft.com/ww.download-avg-anti-spyware-and-anti-rootkit>
 3. http://www.free-av.com/en/products/1/avira_antivir_personal_free_antivirus.html
 4. <http://www.spywareterminator.com>
 5. <http://www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software/default.mspx>
 6. http://www.av-comparatives.org/seiten/ergebnisse_2008_02.php
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Need a Digital TV Tuner? Do you have one?

By Dave Vydra

There is little reason for waiting until February 2009. If you have not applied to the \$40 Voucher Program for your coupons, there is little time to wait. The supply is not finite and will likely run out sooner rather than later. For a link to the program website check the "Stuff" page.

There are numerous DTV Tuners that qualify under the voucher program. Some are being sold for less than \$50 while others are around \$60. Locally, Wal-Mart has two models advertised for \$49.98. A Magnavox and an RCA. However, even though the RCA is rated as better, only the Magnavox is available in North Olmsted. Best Buy has one for \$60 as does HH Gregg.

I have tested the Magnavox and it is okay. A bit slow when shifting channels and even though the usable channels are preset it requires that the entire channel number be set if you use the key pad. This includes adding a period for 2 through 9 and then the subset. One neat feature is the ability to pause the transmission for a "Still". The only problem is that the moment usually passes before still takes effect. Subsequently, I have tested the Zenith from HH Gregg. For the extra ten bucks there is a better experience. The remote can be set to turn on the TV and control volume. It does much better at switching from one channel to another. There is a setting for your "Fav" channel. When you want to go to another channel using the "Recall" button for the last channel you viewed, a drop down box pops up letting you scroll to whichever channel you have watched previously that session. Even if it is two or more. The Zenith uses a dash instead of a period. But, you only need to use it if you are manually installing a station. In any event, I would suggest checking Consumer Reports prior to making your decision.

Apply for you vouchers today. But, be

aware, they have a 90 day life from the date of issuance.

Dick' Saga – A New MultiMedia Computer

By Dick Rose

And now for the whole story regarding the saga of moving to a new MultiMedia computer. . . .

All is well with my new computer . . . I lie a little though . . . As it relates to the Multimedia aspects of Vista Home Premium . . .

I now have the ability to use my system as a DVR . . . I am now receiving Digital Video from Cox Cable (all channels, including the premium channels I subscribe to). Coming through the Multimedia software allows for scheduled recording. I am almost there now . . . Except the recorded movies are not readily available to be copied to DVDs with the Movie Maker software. They record and I am able to view them at any time from the saved files. The DVD Maker software doesn't recognize the recorded movies. The manuals indicate I should be able to do so, but there must be some copywrite code blocking which I have not found the clue to overcoming. I am now investigating shareware software to overcome what Microsoft must have coded into their Multimedia software.

One thing I am starting to realize . . . At this time of life I shouldn't be tackling this kind of problem solving. When I was younger I thrived on these kinds of mysteries . . . But now it's tough trying to get over these hurdles. I repeat . . . At my age I should be near the end of the "learning curve" . . .

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