

Nybbles & Bytes



www.neopc.org

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President's Message:

By Dick Rose

Members of your Executive Board have been in a quandary about the seemingly lack of interest in our Website and moreover the Nybbles & Bytes newsletter. One of the hints which fosters this concern is the poor display of members logging into the "Members Only" segment of our www.neopc.org website. You have to do so to get to the current issue of the newsletter.

Ideas have been tossed around to promote viewing of our Nybbles & Bytes as well as other portions of the site in that exclusive area. As we develop new interests in that "Members Only" area as a stimulation please make it a point to go there often and watch what's new. Here is where each of you can contribute to this cause. Send me ideas as to what would cause you to go to the site often. No thoughts would be discounted—as crazy as they may be. Send them to me at neopc@cox.net with a subject of "NEOPC Website Ideas"

Along these lines, this month we have a contest going to induce readership of the Nybbles & Bytes. See the "CONTEST" page in the "Members Only" area and follow the guidelines to enter the drawing.

While you are there, take a look at the "Members List" page and you will note that all the Login Counts were zeroed out. This was done to begin a monthly report of our activity since August first. We will also determine the effectiveness of any changes we make. While there check out your own "Expiration Date" to verify where you stand. All

dues received as part of the "Christmas in July" promotion have been recorded and dates altered accordingly.

The Nomination Committee will be reporting our new "slate of officers" at the August meeting as prescribed in our Bylaws. The Election of Officers will be during the September General Meeting and they will assume their responsibilities October 1st, the beginning of our fiscal year.

Demons That Lurk in the Darkness of Your Windows PC

Contributed by Janet Anderson

They're called junkware, bloatware, demoware, adware, or—if you're in a really foul mood—crapware. It's software that comes pre-installed on new Windows computers. These irritants might include Corel's graphics programs, Roxio's multimedia applications, trial offers from Internet service providers, etc. They end up on your Windows PC because the companies who are advertising to you in this sneaky way *pay* manufacturers to install them. And PC makers need the ad money. But these unnecessary extras are confusing: The sneaky visitors show up as icons or toolbars when you first boot up, and you may not know that you're actually being lured to other sites to buy a product or service, perhaps on a trial basis. Worse, this stuff clutters your desktop and burdens the OS.

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Through the Gates:

Enter to the Trove of Bills 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

We have come to the end of an era. And, I am now in the midst of a quandary. You see, Bill Gates has resigned from any and all participation in the active running of Microsoft. He is now free to spend his billions as he so desires. Well, actually, it will be the billions in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that he will be dispensing. Along with a few bucks tossed in by Warren Buffet. I do believe that his income will be sufficient enough to allow steak and potatoes now and then. But, then there is my quandary. With no more Mr. Gates to title these articles, how shall I name it? "Through the Ballmer"?

To answer this question I will hearken back to an article I read recently which posed the question of what it would be like had Bill Gates never been born, ala "It's a Wonderful Life". Picture "Clippy" as Clarence. Without Bill Gates, there would have been no MS-DOS. Without MS-DOS there would have been no IBM PC or Windows 1.0. No IBM PC clones and Windows 3.1. Open Source would have been a dream that languished. The controlling factor would be some I-Fruit company. Everything would be proprietary and monopolized. The innovations that we have all experienced through competition would have been doused because there would be few options beyond those doled out by I-Fruit. Yes, Bill Gates has made an obscene amount of money. And, he has gained power and influence in many countries and markets. He has also crushed many competitors and even came up with such novel ideas as Microsoft Bob and Windows ME. In the end, the man and his company became a force that many felt they had to compete with. This helped mobilize many different groups across the industry. And that helped bring about diversity and innovation. So, it isn't all bad and the imprint of Bill Gates abilities will remain with us for a long, long time. Think I will keep the title as is.

Okay, lets get to the good stuff;

Schedule a restart operation with Windows XP's Shutdown utility

To help you automate this type of restart operation, Microsoft Windows XP comes with a command-line utility called Shutdown.exe, which can restart your system. To make this happen automatically,

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you can configure it to run at a specified time with the Scheduled Tasks tool. Here's how:

1. Go to Control Panel | Scheduled Tasks.
2. Double-click Add Scheduled Task to launch the Scheduled Task Wizard.
3. Click Next and then click the Browse button.
4. Access the Windows\System32 folder, select Shutdown.exe, and click Open. The simple way to navigate to this is by typing the first three letters of Windows, System32 and Shutdown in the file name box; selecting the appropriate item and clicking open each time.
5. Follow the wizard through the next two screens to give the task a name and choose a schedule.
6. Enter your user account name and password and click Next.
7. Select the Open Advanced Properties check box and click Finish.
8. In the task's Properties dialog box, add the /r parameter to the end of the command line in the Run text box and click OK. (Be sure to include a space between the last character in the command name and the first character in the parameter list.)
9. Enter your user account name and password and click OK.

When the Shutdown utility runs, you'll momentarily see a small dialog box on your screen before the system restarts. You will also benefit from creating a new restore point. If you use this, please be sure that it will not conflict with any other scheduled tasks.

Save your eyes with DPI Scaling in Windows.

Do you have an LCD monitor, either stand-alone or on a laptop, that has a native resolution that is so high that text and other graphical elements, such as icons, appear small? If so, you've probably lowered the resolution a couple of notches to make it a bit easier to see. However, chances are that isn't an ideal solution because most LCDs don't look all that great at a resolution that is lower than the native resolution. And, you also incur the wrath of the nag screen asking for a higher resolution.

However, with the DPI Scaling tool available in Microsoft Windows Vista or XP, you can use your LCD monitor at its native resolution and still make the text more easily readable and other graphical elements larger. The default DPI (dots per inch) scale setting in Vista is 96 DPI, and it is an old standard. While this setting has served us well for a number of years, the higher resolutions now supported by newer LCD monitors, which typically have a native pixel density of 120 DPI and 144 DPI, mean that the default setting of 96 DPI is too small to display a good quality image. To overcome this problem, Vista incorporates a new DPI scaling engine that will allow you to bump up the size of text and other graphical elements, like icons, so that they better fit the native DPI on laptop and stand-alone LCD monitors and still look as good as they used to at 96 DPI. XP has a similar capability as well.

To change the DPI Scaling setting, right-click on your desktop and choose "Personalize" from the context menu. When you see the Personalization window, click the Adjust Font Size (DPI) link in the Tasks panel on the left side of the window. When you do, you'll encounter a UAC and will need to respond accordingly. Once you see the DPI Scaling dialog box, select the Larger Scale radio button to boost the scale

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immediately to 120 DPI. In most cases, going with the 120 DPI setting will yield satisfactory results. If you click OK, you'll be prompted to reboot the system before the new DPI setting will take effect. For XP, select properties after a right-click on the desktop and then click on the Settings tab and click on Advanced.

If the 120 DPI setting doesn't yield satisfactory results or if you just want to experiment a little, you can click the Custom DPI button. When you do, you'll see the Custom DPI Setting dialog box. There are several ways that you can create a custom DPI setting. First, you can click the drop-down arrow and select one of the preset percentages from the list, you can type a percentage value in the text box, or you can click and drag the ruler to increase the DPI to whatever percentage you want. Keep in mind that no matter which way you choose, changing the DPI setting and clicking OK will require a reboot.

As you can see, the default setting is 100 percent, which is 96 DPI. At the bottom of the ruler you'll see some example text that shows you what the 9-point Segoe UI font will look like at 96 pixels per inch – which essentially is 96 DPI. Table "A" lists all the preset percentages in the drop-down list and the accompanying DPI setting.

Table A

Percentage	DPI Setting
100	96
125	120
150	144
200	192

It's a good idea to give a couple of the preset percentages a try before you begin using the ruler method. Doing so will allow you to determine a baseline that you can then use to set your custom percentage.

To use the ruler method, just click on the number 1 and drag to the right. As you do, you'll see the percentage increase and the example text change to keep pace with the increase. Keep in mind that if you use a DPI setting higher than 96 and you are running Windows Aero, the text and other graphical items in programs that are not designed to work with Vista's new DPI scaling engine might appear blurry. To compensate for those types of programs, Vista incorporates a backward-compatible DPI scaling feature that will kick in when you run those programs. As such, it is advisable that you leave the Windows XP style DPI scaling check box selected. Also keep in mind that the busier your desktop, the more space will be used. The icons and the text will be larger and require more room. 102 dpi was sufficient for my needs after I experimented as explained. Find your own comfort level and enjoy the view.

Darn that Word! The proof is in the proofing.

Automatic spell checking is a boon to all of us that use a word processor. Yet, I still get many messages and/or attachment that contain words that sound correct and yet are misused. For example, the following:

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“My wife wanted to go to sea my cousins knew house. Knot knowing how to get their, we used a map program to get directions. With map in hand we set off later that mourning. The drive in too the country was exhilarating and refreshing. We had to negotiate several hare pin curves but managed to survive. After several ours, we were their. Of coarse, since we didn’t call before leaving, we couldn’t no if anyone was their. Undaunted, we knocked on the door and were soon greeted buy my cousin. We enjoyed the grand tour of there knew home.”

A bit exaggerated but effective to my point. Nary a misspelled word to be found. Yet, plenty of misused words abound. If you read this aloud to someone they would not realize there were so many errors in the typing. In fact, they would likely substitute the correct words in their mind. Using the spell checker does not preclude the due diligence of proofing. Grammar Checker is another matter. If your point is clear, ignore.

Get better system information from the Help and Support Center.

When you need to investigate Microsoft Windows XP system hardware and software, you probably use the System Information tool found on the Start | All Programs | Accessories | System Tools menu. However, Windows XP’s Help and Support Center provides an alternative System Information tool that you definitely should investigate and keep handy.

Instead of a tree-like structure like the one in the main System Information tool, the one in the Windows XP’s Help and Support Center essentially creates a Web page, complete with tables and graphics. Here’s how to access the Help and Support Center’s System Information tool:

1. Go to Start | Help and Support.
2. Under the Pick a Task heading on the Help and Support Center page, click; Use Tools to View Your Computer Information and Diagnose Problems.
3. On the Tools page, select My Computer Information in the Tools column.
4. On the My Computer Information page, select any of the links to view a graphical report of your system.

As you should see, this interface not only makes the information easier to digest but includes links to other resources, both in the operating system and on the Internet, which will help you gather more information or solve problems. If you have never used this, it is an eye opener.

What is this 64-bit thing all about?

We have been using 32-bit architecture for so long it is difficult to remember when it began. To refresh your memory, support for 32-bit applications began with Windows95. However, there were few applications able to take advantage of this progress. Windows98 ushered in an era of plenty with regard to most all applications being released using 32-bit architecture. Now, we are hearing about 64-bit! What does

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this mean to most of us mere mortal users? As you may or may not know, Microsoft is releasing many of its Operating Systems with 32-bit and 64-bit versions. Some of the newest Server OS's are only 64-bit. Lets clarify a little;

64-bit Architecture

64-bit computing is definitely the direction of the future, and its primary advantage over 32-bit computing is in access to system memory. The 32-bit edition of Windows Vista is limited to 4GB of memory, and depending on the devices present, can access between 2 and 3.5 GB of "user available" memory. In contrast, the Business, Enterprise and Ultimate editions of 64-bit Windows Vista can access 128GB of memory. An important consideration, however, is when and how a user should install Windows Vista in 64-bit (x64) over 32-bit (x86). For mainstream consumers and businesses, Windows Vista x86 will be the preferred operating system for the next couple of years.

High End Workstations (HEWs) users should choose the 64-bit version. Complex engineering, audio, or graphics applications often come with the requirement for access to additional memory, so x64 would be the preferred platform. For example, 3DS Studio Max, Maya, and Cakewalk are available today compiled in 64-bit. However, the number of native 64-bit applications is small relative to the availability of native 32-bit applications. While 64-bit processors are standard in almost all machines shipping on the market today, you will want to consider other factors when thinking about 64-bit deployments:

- ◆ The application compatibility between 64-bit Windows and 32-bit Windows is significantly higher than between 16-bit Windows and 32-bit Windows. Indeed, many 32-bit Windows applications will simply run out of the box. However, there are exceptions—64-bit architecture does not support 16-bit applications, and Windows 3.1 sub-systems are unavailable. In addition, a number of older 32-bit applications use 16-bit installers, which prevents them from installing on 64-bit Windows.
- ◆ Specific applications, for example those that are very math intensive, may see performance increases when tuned to 64-bit Windows. However, most applications will see little change in performance. In most cases, 32-bit applications (such as Microsoft Office 2007) are just as responsive running on 64-bit Windows as they are on 32-bit Windows.

All logoed Window Vista device drivers must have both 32-bit and 64-bit versions. This means that over time there will be a great variety of 64-bit device drivers available. However, because a 32-bit device driver won't work with the 64-bit edition of Windows Vista, a device that is just a few years old may not have a driver available. The driver issue may also affect specific 32-bit applications that attempt to install drivers for software protection, as those drivers will not run on 64-bit Windows.

Tip: If you are thinking about deploying the 64-bit edition of Windows Vista, the first step is to inventory and test your applications and peripherals to see whether 32-bit Windows Vista might be a better choice

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Portions of this column have been garnered from several publicly available sources, verified and edited for content. Where an article is used in its entirety without editing, the author and source are acknowledged.

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Demons That Lurk in the Darkness of Your Windows PC (Contd)

The *New York Times*' Stephen Williams offered tips on getting rid of these demons (in an article he wrote for the paper's "Circuits" section on July 24th at page C6). There's a good reason to exorcise the demons: Boot-up will be faster, and your PC's overall performance will improve. However, if you don't know what you're doing, you may need some help with the more radical approaches. (Hint, not in the article, of course: Call on one of our NEOPC experts!) The article is full of suggestions, too numerous to list here. (You can read the whole article online at nytimes.com). But here are a few:

- ◆ Most radical solution, and least recommended: Erase the PC's hard drive and reinstall Vista. Then buy Vista. Drawback: It might not install the proprietary drivers that run printers, keyboards, and other devices which are "married" to a particular manufacturer's PC.
- ◆ Go to the Control Panel and click on the Programs and Features icon. Follow the steps for uninstalling programs. (Just deleting the icon from the desktop gets you nowhere.)
- ◆ Use Vista's Defender. Click Start, go to All Programs, then Windows Defender. Find the Tools button, and go to Software Explorer. In the Category box, select Startup Programs. Select the program you want to disable, and click Disable.
- ◆ Easy solution: Use PC Decrapifier (www.pcdecrapifier.com). It's a free download for noncommercial users of Vista and XP. "Decraper" locates the suspected bloatware,

asks you to confirm that you don't want it, then removes it.

Contributed by Janet Byron Anderson

NEOPC – CAGG Computer Training for Seniors

Our club has volunteered training Seniors from the surrounding area for a number of years along with members of the Computer Assisted Genealogy Group. We conduct these classes at the Fairview Park Senior Center, 20769 Lorain on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays from 10:00 am till 11:30 am. In September we will be beginning our eighth year of this venture.

The Computer Lab at this Center consists of 10 computers, all maintained by us, and the classes are all by appointment. The Senior Center staff graciously makes all the calls and confirms all appointments.

The classes range from raw beginners who never sat before a computer before and elevate to classes in Excel. A series of 12 classes cover that scope.

The next Orientation Class is planned for August 28th at 10:00 am. It is in that class that all prospective class members are instructed as to what classes are available and they determine which classes they want to be included in.

If any NEOPC member 55 years or older can participate – join us on the 28th.

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