

Nybbles & Bytes



www.neopc.org

Voice: 216-521-2907

June, 2010 Volume 26 Issue 9



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

The other day, while rummaging around on the Microsoft site, as I am wont to do at times, I came across some of the following:

Restart often and clean your hard disk

The more you use your PC, the more applications you use and the more services you're running. Closing an application doesn't always close the service. That's why rebooting fixes so many problems; it clears out the memory. Restart at least once a week. Your best bet? Turn off your PC every night. Not only will you clear out your memory, but you'll save energy to boot.

Delete, delete, delete

A clean machine is a fast machine. That means your best option is to uninstall all the programs you don't use. Delete things like trial software, limited edition versions, crapware and anything else you're never going to use. You might even adjust which programs load at startup. Many unwanted programs run in the background upon startup whether you are using them or not. They take up disc space and memory. If you don't need the program, uninstall it. One warning: If you don't recognize a program name or know what it does, don't uninstall it until you've checked to see if it's software essential to running your PC. If you need the program but do not want it starting on boot, disable it. Use CCleaner for this. And, before undertaking any changes, create a restore point. Anti-virus software? Just testing. You always want your security program—but make sure you're only running a single, up-to-date program.

Defrag your hard drive

Over time, files on your computer are moved around the hard drive. Eventually it takes your computer longer to find various parts of the programs which have been moved or fragmented. To boost your computer's speed and overall performance defrag your hard drive on occasion. A companion product with CCleaner from Piriform is called Defraggler and is at least equal to the one that is included in Windows. I use it and prefer Defraggler to several others. Diskkeeper is generally considered to be the best. It just seems to be too much of a nag.

Portions of this column may 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.

Take a Note!



Tidbits of useful information, as I find them.

I did not know this! At a recent seminar I viewed, an interesting fact came to my attention. There is this thing known as the "Terrorism Act" which contains many relatively unknown regulations. Our Forum recently covered a member's difficulty with wireless access at a motel. (I do hope we resolved this.) This occurrence tweaked my ear when it was discussed in the seminar. It was a portion that dealt with "Hospitality" venues and the "Terrorism Act". What is not known by many is, this act has, as one of its regulations, a requirement that hospitality venues i.e., Hotels, Motels, Convention or Reception Halls, etc. have to track and log all of the ISP's that guests visit. What that means to the casual browser would be a record of Gramps going to view XXX. For those who are plotting nefarious acts, the Feds will know who you are. I am not sure this is a good or a bad regulation. But, I believe it may well be a "better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it" situation I can easily live with.

Dick Says; HELP!

Though we don't see too many of our total membership at our meetings it might be of interest to know we have 139 members in our club.

The May, General Meeting, had only 27 members and 3 guests attending. We sure would like to hear from you as to what we are not doing to get you out of the house on our meeting nights. Are there any topics you would like us to consider? Use the FORUM and let us know what you think.

Another recent Forum problem we covered was partially related to the possibly of system overheat. To that end, as Lee and I will be having a Fundamentals evening, I will bring (providing I remember) several processors and their relative heat sinks and fans. It may prove very interesting because of the many changes and advances over the years. Hope you will be attending.

Hot Off the Wire



Breaking news from last month:


Portions of this article were excerpted from various news sources including; Network Daily News and Dark Reading.

Browsing.

When you are browsing and you are asked to provide personal information, do you check to see if the site is prefaced with https? Do you look for the locked lock? Well, STOP! I have just received a few articles and attended an online seminar (webinar) which has addressed this. There was a time when a website requiring personal data would use SSL (Secure Socket Layering) obtained from a Certificate Authority (CA). Initially, the CA's were all reputable. As time progressed, additional CA's became available. The problem was that not all of the CA's did their due diligence. Eventually, the Spammers and Pfishers discovered this.

Now, some are getting Certificates issued to them and are able to obtain the data they need while seeming innocuous.

So, what is the solution? First, have the most up-to-date browser installed. I am sure you may have noticed that with the inception of IE7 and a few of the latest versions of FireFox, Safari and Chrome that a green line appears in or near the address bar. To be absolutely sure this is happening, install the latest version of any that you are using. What does the green bar mean to you? It is a signal that is saying go, it is safe to proceed. Red of course, well you know. If a site address begins with https, the lock and no green bar or red for that matter, it is wise to avoid if it is unknown to you. Why the green bar? It is an extra layer of protection. This indicates that the site not only uses SSL but it also uses Enhanced Verification (EV). Only a few of the most respected CA's are providing the EV-SSL certificates. Any request for a certificate must pass certain rigorous tests and standards. The spammers and Pfishers cannot meet the test. It will cost a reputable web site a few more dollars to obtain an EV-SSL but, this cost, as studies have shown, is more than recouped.

Do you use the AVG Link Scanner? Mighty handy to have and as it is free, no reason not to use it. When you search with Bing or Google, trusted sites will have a Green Check mark next to the link. This, icon will also display additional information about the site if you hover on it. As time goes on, you will begin to notice a change. The green check will be replaced by an icon from VeriSign® . This, of course, is an indication that the site is protected by EV-SSL. VeriSign has entered an agreement to partner with AVG to upgrade their services. So, by all means, get the AVG Link Scanner and install it for your peace of mind. And, upgrade those browsers without fail. Nobody should have IE6. If you have IE7 or IE8, you may have noticed something different in the address bar. When you go to a website, say neopc.com, this portion of the address stands out from the rest. Go to any page within the site and the root page for the site will be darker than the rest of the address. Just another way to alert you should a hyperlink take you somewhere untoward while purporting to be the site you originally entered.

Members Podium -

All Members



Submitted by: Your Club Members

D. Vydra says:

I have something to say and this may be the most appropriate means. I have mentioned an application that I use called "MailWasher". If not in the Newsletter, I have done so at either the Fundamentals meetings or the General Meeting Q & A's. Most of you know that I promote having multiple email addresses. One, for family and friends and at least another for shopping. Adding a throw away address that will eventually have to be replaced is also recommended. It has been mentioned that I likely have more than my share of necessary email addresses. This is why MailWasher is a great tool. Because of the multitude of addresses I require, I have to use MailWasher Pro.

Briefly said; MailWasher Pro works directly with your email server, exactly like your email program does. But there is one important difference: you can tell MailWasher Pro to delete a message at the server, without downloading it. MailWasher Pro retrieves information about all email on the server. With that information (some of which is also processed by MailWasher Pro), you can decide what to do with each individual email - download, delete, or report.

If you check your accounts with MailWasher Pro first, you can delete the email you do not want. Then, when you use your email program, it downloads only the remaining email, those that you want to read. MailWasher Pro can be thought of as a "first line of defense" which weeds out junk, large wasteful attachments and potentially harmful viruses. Unfortunately, MailWasher as I first used it was free for up to three addresses. Later, it was only one. If there is still a free version I am unable to find it. Fortunately, MailWasher Pro is not expensive. A license good for use on your desktop as well as your laptop is only \$40.00. That I am aware of, there are no limits to the number of email address that are being checked. Better yet, MailWasher Pro will also check Hot Mail, Yahoo, Gmail, AOL and more.

Why am I bringing this to your attention? Because of what it has done for me in the past few weeks. While implementing it may be involved, there is a feature called SpamCop which I use when it is required. SpamCop allows for reporting from MailWasher Pro, any obvious spam emails. Recently, I was receiving upwards of 24 spam messages per day for several of the addresses I have. I reported these to SpamCop. I was required to logon to a reporting site where I confirmed that they were indeed spam. Today, those 24 or more spam messages have been reduced to zero. Although, I am sure there will be more. It just takes the spammers awhile to ramp up. I am ready for them.

Get a 30 day trial at: <http://www.firetrust.com>

D. Lewis says:

At the Wednesday May 12, 2010 NEOPC Club meeting, I presented the topic of Internet Security was presented. A question from the audience was asked about deleting log files. After a bit of thought and reflection on the matter, I want to further expand on my answer:

The decision on deleting log files often depends upon the application and how a particular application uses and manages the log files internally. This is often divided into broad categories and certain features may be utilized interchangeably between categories, depending on the program.

Program Managed - The program application will provide a means of deleting files within the application itself. For example, Symantec Norton Anti Virus will provide a view log files along with details of what has happened after a security event. The user is then provided with a choice to review the basic log, view details about each recorded event and either let the log continue to record events in the file or delete the log. Some programs also provide the opportunity to save the file to an easily read format such as a text file.

Automatic Program Creation - If one deletes a log file, the program will detect that there is no log file and automatically creates a new file.

Program Error with Missing Log - In this instance, the program is dependent upon the log file being in the proper place and the lack of the log can cause the program to produce an error. The error may be as simple as providing the end user with a message that it can't find the log to causing the application to fail with unknown or sometimes disastrous results.

Deleting Logs - Most program log files are relatively small and may be text based, this keeping the relative file size minimal. Even years of logs files may only consume mere kilobytes of file space, which may be inconsequential with Terabytes of available storage on many of today's computers. However, some applications may benefit from a small log file size, especially if the application has been resident on one's system for a long period of time and searching the log consumes time, thus causing degradation in performance of the particular application.

So the safest method of deleting a log is to do the following:

Rename the log file by changing the extension. For example, security.log should be renamed to security.old or securitydotlog.old so that you will easily remember what was renamed in the event that the controlling application really needs the file to operate.

In cases where the application will automatically create a new log file, things should be fine when the application starts up and sees that there is no log. If it really, really needs the log file, you will find out when the program does not operate properly and can change the name of the renamed file back to what it should be.

The presentation slides are available at <http://www.condohome.net/neopc2>

Especially useful is the information on the Resources page as links to selected websites which provide a wealth of security information and tools for computer users. And, as the presentation was based on research, the References pages provide the sources of the research that went in to the makeup of the presentation.

D. Rose says:

At the end of May your NEOPC volunteers concluded another season of classes at the Fairview Senior Center. That made nine years of volunteering our services teaching the use of the computer to the Senior Community. That represents: 7500 class hours; involving 962 Seniors.

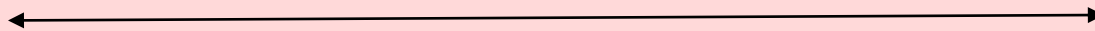
The following members contributed a number of hours for which we offer our heartfelt thanks: Bill Frank; Molly Jamba; Rich Kolofer; Lou Loeach; Jim McIntyre; Bob Minnich; Dick Rose; David Vydra. Lee Gerber has spent many hours keeping the ten computers in our Computer Lab functioning well. Lee has contrived a program which shuts the computers down for a period of time during the night and scrubs the previous day's ills so that we get a fresh start each morning. As you might imagine, since these computers are available daily to the seniors, they do get quite a bit of usage. Not all, by expert users.

We fully expect to start our tenth year in September. We currently have 1323 class hours booked waiting for that day. A number of our original volunteers have become exhausted or found other interests to occupy their time so we are now soliciting more volunteers. Please contact Bill Frank or Dick Rose if you feel you would like to be a part of this effort in the coming season. It doesn't involve a great deal of your time and you needn't volunteer on a steady schedule. We can certainly arrange to have you join us at your convenience. Our normal schedule has been: classes two days a week from 10:00 till 11:30 am; usually on Mondays and Tuesdays. So Volunteer if you will - and it does make you feel good to be doing a useful activity.



SUMMER COMPUTER OFFERING - YAHOO GROUPS WORKSHOPS

Quite a number of you currently enjoy the wonders of the Internet via your own personal computers or by using the public sites which provide computer access such as our Computer Lab at the Fairview Park Senior Center or the local Libraries. A FREE internet tool becoming more popular each day is provided by Yahoo. It is known as Yahoo Groups. A number of us are communicating in friendly groups via Yahoo Groups already. Local Groups now active are: Our Senior Center Yahoo Group; Greater Cleveland Genealogical Society Yahoo Group, Computer Assisted Genealogy Yahoo Group; Brothers Keeper Software Group; fp_eBay Group; and thousands of other hobby related Groups nationally.



As is the case, all too often something new related to personal computers is considered mysterious to many and they hesitate to try them or learn to get the most enjoyment from them.

The Computer Training Team at our Fairview Senior Center is going to provide a Summer series of workshops on the use of Yahoo Groups to acquaint those of you who are game and willing to venture into learning more about that mysterious computer.

These will be conducted during June, July and August on the third and fourth Tuesday morning from 10:00 to 11:30 am. Mark your calendars now and plan on joining us. The Workshops will be conducted in the Television Room at the Senior Center. If you are not interested in joining us I would appreciate hearing from you so that I can remove your name from our list of potential attendees.

Win Win7 Contest

Regrettably, there will not be a contest this month. Possibly, not for the foreseeable future. In April I brought the prize to the General Meeting. Between that time and now, I have been unable to locate it. My guess is that I inadvertently included it with some boxes which I had tossed. Or, that I left it on the shelf in the coat check area. In any event, until I can locate it or get another copy, the contest will be held in abeyance.

My apologies and I am hoping the contest will run at a future date.

David Vydra

NEOPC - General Meeting Presentations

Date

2010 Programs

June 9	“Q & A” with Lee Gerber & Dave Vydra. Please bring your questions to get answered.
July 14	“Microsoft Excel 2010 Updates” by Bill Jelen / Mr. Excel.

Proposed Programs

August 11	“Digital Photography” by Mike Volker. Mike’s talk includes taking better digital pictures and using Adobe Photoshop Elements Software.
September 8	“Web Browsers” by Dennis Lewis. Dennis’s talk includes Explorer, Firefox, Chrome and others.
October 13	“E-readers for E-Books” by Shawn Walsh. Shawn’s talk on e-readers includes the new Apple “Ipad”- Tablet, Kindle and others.
November 10	“How to Evaluate Medical Information on the Internet” by West Shore Hospital Staff.
December	Open

JPM 5/26/2010

Classic Insults

- 'Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go.' - Oscar Wilde
- 'He loves nature in spite of what it did to him.' - Forrest Tucker
- 'Why do you sit there looking like an envelope without any address on it?' - Mark Twain
- 'His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork.' - Mae West
- 'He is not only dull himself, he is the cause of dullness in others.' - Samuel Johnson
- 'He is simply a shiver looking for a spine to run up.' - Paul Keating
- 'There's nothing wrong with you that reincarnation won't cure.' Jack E. Leonard
- 'He has the attention span of a lightning bolt.' - Robert Redford




Coming Events

June 2010

Event_Date	Event
06/08	Northeast Ohio PC Club ***MORNING Fundamentals Special Interest Group*** (SIG). Fairview Park Senior Center 9:30 - 11:30am. Fundamentals of computer use - OPEN FORUM - Any and all topics discussed - Bring a question, bring a topic - Guests always welcome - Always coffee. Always free and open to the public. Second Tuesday of the
06/09	Northeast Ohio PC Club (NEOPC)General Meeting, Porter Public Library, 27333 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, OH. Agenda: 6:30pm- Social(Pastries and Beverages); 7:00pm- Club Announcements: 7:15pm-Main Program "Q & A" by Lee Gerber and Dave Vydra. Bring in your Questions and Computer problems ...to share with the Club Members.
06/15	Yahoo Groups Summer Workshops - third and forth Tuesday of each month - June through August - 10:00 till 11:30 am - Fairview Park Senior Center - conducted by the NEOPC/CAGG Volunteer Training Team. If you want to know more about the Yahoo Group concept join us for these special workshops - twice monthly through August. Specifically for our Senior Club members. Contact Bill Frank or Dick Rose if interested.
06/16	June 16, 2010 Ladies Only Special Interest Group meeting at Westlake Porter Public Library from 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm. The Library is located at 27333 Center Ridge Road, Westlake, Ohio. All ladies are invited, whether or not members of Northeast Ohio PC Club (NEOPC). Come with your questions and/or comments about software you have. Please check the NEOPC website www.neopc.org for more details. NOTE: This group does not meet in July or August. Hope you have a great summer! See you in September.
06/21	Computer & Microsoft Study Group, Meetings are usually held on 3rd Mondays and the times vary during the day or evening at the Middleburg Heights Public Library. The Library is located at 15600 E. Bagley Road, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130. The next meeting is on June 21, 2010, will be held from 1-3 p.m. We discuss Microsoft Office products. Always free and open to the public; whether or not members of Northeast Ohio PC Club. If you need additional information, contact Eve Sachs, Special Interest Group Leader, E-Mail: eveneopc@wowway.com.
06/22	Yahoo Groups Summer Workshops - third and forth Tuesday of each month - June through August - 10:00 till 11:30 am - Fairview Park Senior Center - conducted by the NEOPC/CAGG Volunteer Training Team. If you want to know more about the Yahoo Group concept join us for these special workshops - twice monthly through August. Specifically for our Senior Club members. Contact Bill Frank or Dick Rose if interested.
06/22	Northeast Ohio PC Club ***EVENING Fundamentals Special Interest Group*** (SIG). NO MEETINGS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE