

Newsletter

Connecticut PC User's Group

February 2010
Vol. 28 No. 6

Preview of the Next CTPC Meeting

February 23, 2010 - 6:30 p.m.

PC Virtualization plus Windows 7

At this month's meeting, Marty Roth will give a live demonstration of PC "virtualization" — that is, running one operating system inside another. He'll show how Windows 7 (Professional and Ultimate editions) can run applications designed specifically for Windows XP by seamlessly launching them in a virtual Windows XP environment, without the need to shut down Windows 7 and reboot into XP. The demo will include an unusual twist, so

pay close attention! Marty is a long time CTPC member and runs his own computer consultancy business, Incon Research.

Then, CPTC Pres. Walt Graham will have some suggestions about migrating to Windows 7 from the perspective of customizing it to look and work the way you want. He says it's actually easier to add, remove or configure features than in previ-

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Mar 23rd - Tuesday 6:30 p.m.
CTPC Meeting
Norwalk Transit Bus Depot

Apr 27th - Tuesday 6:30 p.m.
CTPC Meeting
Norwalk Transit Bus Depot

GENERAL MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the 4th (not last) Tuesday of each month except December. There is no charge to attend general meetings. See back page for directions.

www.ctpc.org

Alan Phelps

Smart Computing magazine

Keep Track Of Passwords With Your Browser

Unless you use the same password for everything (which you really shouldn't do), it can be next to impossible to remember all of your login information. Thankfully, many popular Web browsers will step in and remember them for you. After all, remembering is one of the things computers do best.

Internet Explorer

Internet Explorer 8 includes options to save user IDs and passwords as well as other data you might enter in form fields. To see whether these options are enabled, open the Tools menu and choose Internet Options. Select the Content tab and click the Settings button under Auto-Complete. In Settings, tick the checkbox next to User Names And Passwords On Forms and click OK.

As long as you have this feature enabled, you should see a dialog box when you fill in a username/password combo asking whether you want IE to save the information. You might not want to save passwords for especially sensitive pages, such as an online banking site. For most

run-of-the-mill sites, however, having the browser fill out your ID and password automatically can make navigating the Web a lot easier.

Firefox

To see if Firefox 3.5 is set up to save Web logins and passwords, click the Tools menu, choose Options, and select the Security tab. Under the Passwords section, check the box next to Remember Passwords For Sites. The next time you enter a password, a bar at the top of the Firefox window will ask whether you want the browser to remember the information.

If you're worried at all about someone else potentially using your computer and logging in to sites with your personal data, you can also check the box next to Use A Master Password. With this option enabled, you'll be prompted to create a master password, and Firefox gives you feedback on its quality via its Password Quality Meter. This one password becomes the key for unlocking all of the Web sites for which you've saved login information. The next time you're browsing, Firefox will request your master password before filling out any Web forms. You'll only need to enter the master password once per browsing session. It's a good security compromise. Just be sure to remember it; if you forget it, you won't be able to access any of the information that the master password protects.

Should you forget a password you're certain Firefox knew, take a look at which passwords the browser is remembering by clicking the Saved Passwords button. From that screen, you can scroll through all of your saved login information and remove any passwords you don't want Firefox to know.

The Exceptions button shows you a list of sites for which you told Firefox not to save passwords. If you accidentally told Firefox not to remember the login for a particular page, you can remove the site from the exceptions list here.

Chrome

In Chrome, click the wrench menu on the right side of the browser toolbar and choose Options. Click the Personal Stuff tab. Near the top of the window, you'll see a Passwords section with the options Offer To Save Passwords or Never Save Passwords. If you opt to save passwords, Chrome asks if you want to save user IDs and passwords you enter at different sites. You can also decline on a site-by-site basis.

Click the Show Saved Passwords button to see what passwords Chrome is keeping. As with Firefox, you'll see a list of site addresses on the left side of the window and your usernames on the right. Click the Show Password button to see what password Chrome is saving for a selected site. The Remove and Remove All buttons will delete login information if you'd like. You can also click the Exceptions tab to see what passwords you've asked Chrome not to keep. You can

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What To Do When You Can't Access A Web Site

You're eager to update Facebook or check out that funny new video your sister recommended. You open a browser or click a link and . . . nothing. After an interminable wait while Internet Explorer churns away, nothing loads except an error message or, worse, an entirely different site. What do you do? We'll help you figure out what's wrong and get back to where you were going.

Bad Address

First, figure out the source of the problem. If nothing but an error loads, try a different site. It's

entirely possible that the problem is limited to the single URL (uniform resource locator) you're accessing. If you can get around normally elsewhere on the Web, check your source for the "broken" link. You may have mistyped the URL or clicked a bad hyperlink. A close reading of the address will usually reveal typos or malformed

addresses. If you're clicking through from an email, look for line breaks or otherwise incomplete links. Many email clients automatically turn text that looks like a URL into a link, but can misread unusual addresses or cut URLs short when the address contains unexpected characters or crosses more than one line. If everything looks all right with the address, try searching the Web for the site you're seeking. Web sites move occasionally, forwarding isn't perfect, and it isn't in effect forever. And, just as with people, eventually someone else moves in. If everything still checks out, consider the possibility that the site is simply down temporarily. Wait and try again later, but, if it doesn't work after awhile, go back to your original source and check to make sure you have the correct URL.

If, on the other hand, you can't get to any other sites either, the problem goes beyond a single bad address. In that case, start your troubleshooting with the browser and local machine. First, see whether other Web-enabled applications can access the Internet. If you use an email client such as Outlook or Windows Mail, see if it can send and receive. You can also try searching the iTunes Store or using a different browser (such as Google Chrome or Firefox) to see if they can connect. Alternatively, open up Windows' command line interface and see if you can ping a

Command line interfaces have an imposing aura. For old timers, they evoke BBS networks and Unix programming. For those who came to computing in the Windows era, they're a bewildering mix of arcane syntax and obscure keyboard shortcuts. But Windows' Command Prompt (formerly called the DOS Prompt) is a powerful network troubleshooting tool. To launch, just type cmd in the Start search menu in Vista or Win7. In WinXP, open the Run option from the Window's Start menu, type cmd, and click OK.

PING. The PING command tells you whether a given site is accessible. This is useful for confirming whether the site is up and whether you have a connection at all. The syntax is simple: type `ping www.yahoo.com` and press ENTER to see if your machine can find Yahoo's server.

IPCONFIG. Getting your machine's network details (IP Address, Internet Gateway) from Windows' networking properties box can be laborious. Entering `ipconfig` into the command line, on the other hand, provides info in an instant. To reset the connection without restarting your machine, try typing `ipconfig /release`, pressing ENTER, and then entering `ipconfig /renew` and see if that resolves your connectivity problems.

TRACERT. Short for Traceroute, the TRACERT command will document each step in the route from your machine to the specified destination. TRACERT is helpful for pinpointing exactly where a request goes, how long it takes at each step, and, if it stops short somewhere, the source of a connection problem. Try `tracert www.google.com` as an example.

common Internet address such as `www.yahoo.com`. See the "Take Command" sidebar for more details on simple command line options. If other applications can access the Web, you have a problem with your browser—not with your connection. Check the browser's settings (click Tools and Internet Options in Internet Explorer 8) to see if a privacy, security, or other setting is preventing you from connecting to a given site. Simply closing and reopening the browser may also do the trick. If you're fine after the restart, there was probably just something corrupted in the browser session and you can move merrily along.

Bad Connection

When no programs can get online, you have a larger connectivity problem. In that

case, the single most likely solution is a simple reboot. There are all sorts of ways that a network connection can go bad, and restarting the machine resolves most of them. If a reboot fails to get you back online, dig deeper into your PC's settings. Check your firewall and security software. Is there an emergency lockdown, parental control, or some other setting preventing you from getting online? Check your hardware. Open Device Manager by right-clicking Computer (My Computer in Windows XP), choosing Manage, and clicking Device Manager. Here, make sure

Windows recognizes your network adapter by right-clicking it in the Device Manager list and choosing Properties. Look for any alerts or errors. Also, check the back of your PC. Is the network cable plugged in? Is the wireless antenna correctly positioned?

If you're connecting wirelessly, open the Windows wireless connection status screen (or your wireless adapter's custom software, if you use that instead) by double-clicking/clicking the Wireless Network Connection icon in Windows XP, Vista,

or 7. Make sure you can see your wireless network and that you're connected. You may need to disconnect and reconnect if your settings have changed or your wireless access point has been updated recently.

After running out of local machine options, expand your focus outward. Check the physical connection to your router, modem, and/or wall jack. See if you can access other computers or printers on your local network. Back in the browser, enter the IP address of your Internet gateway or network router (see the manufacturer's documentation for default settings). If you can access the router's admin console but not public Internet sites, the problem lies with your external connection or modem

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MotionDSP vReveal: Flawed video no more

A Software Review

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"Do you shoot video with your cell phone, digital camera, or other handheld device?" is the question found on the web-site for vReveal. "Then the chances are good that you have shaky, dark, noisy, pixilated, or blurry videos. Less-than-ideal videos that obscure your life's best, captured moments."

"But those moments don't have to be lost to common video problems anymore," the site promises. "vReveal has the advanced enhancement technology and "one click" touch-up tools that make it easy to dramatically improve the quality of flawed videos."

I was impressed by vReveal's enhancements of my video. I was equally impressed by the dramatic speed increase resulting from off-loading computing from my motherboard CPU to my system video card. As advertised, vReveal improves snowy/jerky/low quality video. It also exports a high quality photo, derived from lower quality source video.

Installation

I own a compatible late-model NVIDIA graphics card (8800GT). I downloaded the latest NVIDIA graphics driver, which enabled vReveal software to use parallel processing by ~100 processors in my video card. During the simple vReveal installation, I specified a video folder to be "watched" by the new program.

Evaluation

Figure 1 shows the primary user screen. My video was displayed split-screen, in order to contrast before and after application of the video enhancements. I discovered an important, but unadvertised use for this amazing software. vReveal improves the quality of Standard Definition (SD) video, so the contrast becomes less noticeable when SD videos are used in the same movie with High Definition (HD) video.

My Standard Definition video sources include traditional SD camcorders as well as my digital still camera (in "video capture" mode). My HD sources include a HD camcorder, and digital photos, which I "pan" and "zoom" to create motion.

I used the following vReveal settings to enhance my Standard Definition video:

- "One Click Fix" (this automatically "Cleaned", "Sharpened", and Auto-Contrast").
- "De-interlace". ("de-interlace" is an important feature which prevented unacceptable artifacts during video with fast motion).

To view the result of video enhancement, I used my favorite video editor to create one timeline that contained three types of content.

- Standard definition video, no enhancement
- Standard Definition video, enhanced with vReveal
- High Definition video

I then "burned" a standard DVD, and also "burned" a High Definition BluRay DVD (encoded with the optional HDV MPEG2 format). I used Cyberlink "Power DVD" software with a 24 inch Samsung LCD (1680X1050) to "play" the DVDs, and compare SD video (with and without enhancements) to the HD video.

I then "burned" a standard DVD, and also "burned" a High Definition BluRay DVD (encoded with the optional HDV MPEG2 format). I used Cyberlink "Power DVD" software with a 24 inch Samsung LCD (1680X1050) to "play" the DVDs, and compare SD video (with and without enhancements) to the HD video.

Visible results

The original (un-enhanced) SD content was clearly deficient to HD video content. After enhancement, my SD content exhibited remarkable video improvement (although not quite up to the high definition sources): Snow (especially resulting from low light) totally disappeared on my SD

content after enhancement. Colors were brighter, blacks were blacker, and contrast was enhanced.

vReveal, owned by NVIDIA, includes a performance and control dashboard to showcase the speed increase resulting from leveraging NVIDIA video card GPU (graphics processors). My jobs ran twice as fast when I shifted the processing from my high performance quad core to my lower-end video card!

(Enhancement of my 40 minute SD video took about 90 minutes when off-loaded to the video card, and took about 180 minutes when confined to my high performance quad processor.)

System Requirements

Hardware: Intel or AMD 1.6GHz CPU, 1GB RAM, 50MB hard drive space; NVIDIA video card with "CUDA" enabled (GeForce 8-series, and higher); 100GB free disk per hour of enhanced video (uncompressed AVI)

Software: Microsoft® Windows XP with Service Pack 2 or Windows Vista™ Home Premium, Business, Ultimate, or Enterprise (certified for 32-bit editions).

Output file types supported: WMV and uncompressed AVIs

Price: \$49, download from www.nzone.com 30-day trial software is available (watermark is applied to output video files.)

For more information: <http://www.vreveal.com/> ♣

CTPC Dues Were Due 1/1/10

There is a membership list on the CTPC web site showing dues owing - click 'About CTPC' on the navigation bar and see the 'Members' section. Everyone will owe \$25.00 as of January 1, 2010 except those who show a \$0 balance. You can mail your check to the CTPC, PO Box 291, New Canaan, CT 06840.

You can also bring your check to the January meeting. Note that only paid-up

members will be mailed the February CTPC newsletter which should go out on February 13, 2010.

Lapsed Members

If your name does not appear on the list on the web site, then you are not currently a member. A check for \$25.00 sent to the PO box will re-establish your membership for 2010. ♣

What are RSS Feeds?

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What are RSS Feeds? According to the Wikipedia, "RSS (most commonly translated as 'Really Simple Syndication' but sometimes 'Rich Site Summary') is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video in a standardized format."

Let's see whether we can translate that into everyday language. Most of us have favorite sites or blogs we visit regularly - perhaps news, genealogy, weather, or other types of sites that are updated regularly. Instead of having to click on bookmarks to navigate between sites, or typing the URL of each site, it is much faster to have one location that posts links to the latest updated information. That is done by subscribing to an RSS Reader. Both Yahoo & Google offer readers, and there are other choices as well.

I subscribed to the Google Reader by visiting www.google.com/reader. Because I already had a Gmail account, I was able to login immediately and add subscriptions. That is done in one of two ways: clicking on an icon or copying code by clicking on the URL of the feed and pasting it in Add Subscription on your Google Reader home page.

Let's walk through two examples. We'll start by clicking on Add Subscription. A search bar opens that allows us to search for an RSS Feed. I will type The Repository and click Add. Links pop up on the right side of the screen, one of them titled The Repository. Next I will click the + sign by Subscribe. I am then given the option of adding the link to a folder. I want to create a new folder titled News, so I will click Add to a Folder and select New Folder. A screen pops up that allows me to name the folder. Super simple!

Let's look at a different example. In this case we want to add a link to The Christian Law Association at <http://www.christianlaw.org/cla/>. While browsing their web site, we find an orange broadcast symbol

that stands for link to an RSS Feed. When we click on it, a page of code pops up! No need to panic! We will click on the URL and copy it (I use Ctl + C), open the Google Reader, click on Add Subscription, paste the URL in the search box, and click Add.

Some sites let us add a subscription by simply checking an icon that says Google Reader. We click the link and a window pops up that allows us to login to our account and add the link.

In the future it is simple to go to www.google.com/reader, login, and view updates. We can indicate that we want all messages older than one day to be marked as Read. Now only today's unread links are bold. We can organize links into folders. Yes, we can unsubscribe and we can add new subscriptions, change the folders in which they are stored, view the links as lists, share, search within links, and more.

Why not try it using this technology. You will get the latest information in one easily accessible place, thus maximizing precious time. ♠

Joan McIlmoyl Cleghorn, a member of Big Blue and Cousins, Canada, www.bbcc.org, [joansjoy \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:joansjoy@gmail.com)

Hints for the Wannabe Blogger

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Do I Need Or Want to Have a Blog?

WHAT IS A BLOG?

Now, for many, the first question is "what on earth is a blog?" and, "why would I want one?" The origin of the actual word 'blog' comes from the definition of what it really is - a web log - which then became shortened to 'blog'.

People are using blogs for many varied purposes. Some use them like a personal diary, as though the world is truly fascinated by the minutiae of their daily lives (though in the case of celebs, that may be the case). Others, for sharing their knowledge of a particular subject which doesn't necessarily lend itself to publishing a book; and still reporting on the constantly changing happenings in a specific area of interest.

In many instances now, professional re-

porters, whether radio, TV or in print, are writing blogs as well as their regular reporting functions. Others, for reporting on the constantly changing happenings in a specific area of interest.

BLOG ADVANTAGES

There are two advantages of using blogs over publishing in the more traditional ways First, they can be interactive, allowing the readers to make comments, add to the information or contradict the writer.

Second, as mentioned, the ability to update immediately with new or additional information.

WHY I STARTED A BLOG

My purpose in starting a blog at the end of June was prompted by an article in the Family Chronicle which pointed out how, by publishing a family history

book, relations that you'd never known or connected with would suddenly contact you.

This struck a chord with me as I was in the midst of planning a family history book and wanted to connect with others researching this same family. Obviously, publishing a book wasn't the answer for my particular situation.

Creating A Blog

After some thought on this, I decided to investigate what was involved in creating a blog, thinking this might accomplish my purpose. Of course, one can use any of the social media sites such as MySpace,

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The CTPC Volunteers

President, Walter Graham, President@CTPC.org
Treasurer, Helen Sienkiewicz, Treasurer@CTPC.org
Programs, Ben Wilson, Programs@CTPC.org
Random Access/Help Panel, Roger Giler, Help@CTPC.org
Newsletter Editor, Mike Alcorn, Editor@CTPC.org
Review Chairman, Jim Sullivan, Reviews@CTPC.org
APCUG Representative, Lloyd Plehaty, APCUG-rep@ctpc.org

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WEBSITES:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Kindle
<http://www.downloadfreepdf.com>
<http://www.ebooknetworking.com>
<http://www.free-ebooks.net>
<http://worldlibrary.net>
<http://www.e-booksdirectory.com>
<http://www.ebooksdownload-free.com>

Introduction

About a year ago, I wrote about some of the excellent resources available that provide a wide selection of fulllength books as free downloads. Since writing that column I have become aware of some other websites that also offer a wide selection of free and inexpensive ebooks. For those who may not be aware, e-books are books of all genres that are available for download.

KINDLE

A large assortment of titles, are available for a fee that can be downloaded to Amazon's proprietary Kindle; Amazon claims that over 360,000 titles, including many current best sellers, are available for download.

NOOK

Barnes and Noble recently announced its own proprietary e-book reader, the Nook, which will be released in early 2010. Barnes and Noble has stated that it will have over a million titles available for download to the Nook.

Passwords - cont'd from Pg 1

remove an entry on the list and then visit the site again if you've changed your mind. ♠

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While many new releases and bestsellers will be priced at about \$10 at both Amazon and Barnes and Noble, there is also a massive library of titles that can be downloaded for free from a variety of sources.

The Kindle and Nook are relatively expensive, retailing for \$259 each. For those not willing to spend that amount, there are thousands of titles that can be freely downloaded and displayed on computer in the universal PDF format.

New Resources

In the minutes before typing this column, I downloaded a few titles from two sources that I have not used in the past. Both required free registration, and both offer a selection of both free and paid content.

tent.

The paid content is usually reasonable in price, with one website offering unlimited downloads of paid content for about \$5 per month (free-ebooks.net, discounts available), and another offering unlimited downloads for \$9 per year (worldlibrary.net).

DOWNLOADFREEPDF.COM

The first "new" website for me was downloadfreepdf.com, where I found a book for one of my daughters who recently had her first child.

I downloaded for free "Baby's First Year - What Every New Parent Needs to Know!" as a PDF file for my daughter. I

Continued on Page 6

Blogger Hints - continued from Page 2

Facebook, etc. as a type of blog. However, I was looking for specific 'blog' sites. Well, typing 'free blog sites' into Google gave me far more results than I could have dreamed of!

Fortunately, there were two with which I was somewhat familiar so I opted to check them out first. I wanted simple and easy to use.....nothing fancy, just the ability to type whatever I wanted to post and have it work. Obviously I was asking a lot for anything connected with technology right? Actually, wrong. I was able to set up the blog, type out my first posting and have it online within an hour!

TYPE OF SITE YOU WANT

You want a site that gives clear, easy to understand directions and allows you to have some choices on the appearance or theme of your blog. Also, if you want some interaction with your readers, make it easy for them to add their comments. The site I chose definitely qualified under these points; much more so than the second site I checked out. I also checked out a few that I wasn't as familiar with and found that my first choice was still the best for my purpose.

BLOG SITES

The two choices I initially checked out were Google's Blogspot and Wordpress.

They can be found at www.blogspot.com and www.wordpress.com; however, be sure to check out some of the others as well.

Conclusion

Should you decide to start a blog, there is one caveat I'd both read about, as well as heard about from others:

Don't start posting, and collecting followers of the site, only to lose interest, and just stop posting, or become very erratic in your postings.

When first starting my blog, I hoped to post about three times a week, with no less than once a week. In the nine weeks since I started, I've made 18 posts so have averaged two per week, even though I had a couple of weeks when I didn't make any posts due to the death of my mother.

Now, was posting my blog successful in my original purpose? So far, yes. I've heard from a couple of researchers with whom I'd lost contact a number of years ago, plus another couple of whom I'd never heard, so I certainly accomplished that part of my goal.

Another bonus is the information I'm gaining from those connections that I might not have otherwise found. Should you wish to take a look at my blog, here's the address: www.mccilmoylfamna.blogspot.com.

If you decide that having a blog is something you'd like to do, I wish you well, and have fun with it! For tips on 'how to blog' just type 'blog tutorial' into a search engine and you'll find lots of choices. ♠

also found and downloaded two free e-books for my wife, “10 Strategies to Improve Your Nursing Care”, and “Student Nurse’s Bible”.

Even though they were all free, I had to go through a checkout process as if I was paying for them, being sure to check the button that indicated that they were free. As soon as I completed the checkout process, the books were instantly available for download as PDF files.

The default is to display the files in a browser window; in order to save the e-books on the computer, be sure to click on the “save” icon in the browser window (often a floppy-disk icon), and not the File-Save command on the browser toolbar.

EBOOKNETWORKING.COM

The website ebooknetworking.com has an impressive menu of topics, but many of the topics only offer a small selection of e-books.

I like interesting cookbooks, and this website has four titles available as free downloads, “300 Chicken Recipes”, “Delicious Diabetic Recipes,” “Great Sand-

Next CTPC Meeting

cont’d from Page 1

ous versions — but you need to know where to look. New file “libraries” and search features can help you find things easily on a disorganized hard drive, but the trade-off is a somewhat dizzying collection of folders that appear to contain files but actually just point to other folders where the files really reside. “It’s a little like looking into a mirror and seeing the reflection of another mirror that reflects back to the first mirror, etc. You know what you’re looking at but it’s difficult to tell exactly where it really is!” Microsoft likes to provide pre-structured system folders for documents, pictures, music, videos, etc. but if you’re a stickler for saving and organizing your files where you think they belong (on a D:\ drive, for example) Windows 7 makes that fairly easy too — it’s just not so obvious. Windows 7 is probably Microsoft’s best consumer OS yet and, with a little tweaking, the user experience can be even better.

The meeting begins with “Random Access,” a discussion of all things digital hosted by Richard Frisch, and concludes with our traditional Pizza SIG at Uncle Joe’s. ♠

wiches”, and the “Big Book of Cookies”.

EBOOKS.NET

The website free-ebooks.net offers a limited number of free e-books for download in PDF format (5 per month free), or unlimited downloads for \$5 per month or \$20 per year. There is no limit on the number of titles that can be viewed for free online in HTML (webpage) format.

The first category I looked at was “Business” which contained 166 titles available in PDF format, or viewable online in HTML format, which can be viewed in any browser.

Free-ebooks.net also makes most of its titles available in the Mobipocket format which may be downloaded and read on Amazon’s Kindle, mobile phones, BlackBerry, Palm, and several other reader formats.

Another interesting category was the “Food and Recipes” section, which offered 66 cookbooks. One that attracted my attention was “Cajun Clark’s Cookbook”, which contains a free selection of about 80 Cajun recipes, and a link to purchase the entire cookbook of over 1000 recipes.

In the Humor category was a very cute (and clean) “Knock Knock... Who’s Joking?” a collection of hundreds of short jokes and one-liners.

Being a history buff, I found a very interesting e-book in the History category on a subject that I had not seen before, “The Big Guns of the Boer War”, by W. J. Havenga.

Considering that thousands of people are paying \$259 for a Kindle or a Nook, a \$20 annual subscription to free-ebooks.net, which provides unlimited downloads, is a relative bargain.

For computer users, finding just one good title a year justifies the expense.

E-BOOKS DIRECTORY

Another interesting website is ebooksdirectory.com, which lists 2807 free e-books in 399 categories.

The actual e-books are hosted on a variety of websites, including Project Gutenberg, and available in a variety of formats, including PDF, plain text, and a variety of formats compatible with the various e-book readers.

I found the listings comprehensive, and downloaded (for free) several titles on military history, religion, health, law,

hunting & fishing, science, and travel. I found especially interesting “Mom’s Home Cooking” volumes one and two, which had about 250 recipes each. There is something here for everyone at a price that can not be beat.

WWW.EBOOKSDOWNLOADFREE.COM

For those looking for free e-books that are generally highly technical, ebooks-downloadfree.com has a wide assortment available.

The major categories of books at ebooksdownloadfree.com include medical, computer, sciences, history, and management. These books are mostly recent publications and require a few mouse clicks to reach the download page, but the results are well worth it.

I downloaded several of the books and while the files were large, often over 10mb, they were the complete books in PDF format, including all of the pictures. Some of the downloads were in the RAR compression format, but there are several freeware utilities available that can uncompress the RAR format. Some of the downloads had an attached password text file which included a key to uncompress the files.

A few of the download links opened up popup ads, which I quickly closed. This site, ebooksdownloadfree.com had some of the best current titles available.

Conclusion

I like to read and have reference books available. Free or inexpensive e-books may be the way to go. ♠

How Can I Use Standard Internet Programs with AOL?

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Back in the Internet's pre-history, AOL was the leading online service, providing connectivity, software applications, content, news, games, and support. But as Internet availability and diverse content grew, the need for an all-inclusive "walled garden" — as AOL was charmingly called — diminished.

Even now, though, AOL provides many people's entire online experience. While there's nothing wrong with that — and there's some appeal to one-stop shopping, such as better program integration and easier problem determination — it's worth recognizing that the garden walls have come down and that nearly any current standard Internet software works with AOL, because they communicate using TCP/IP, the Internet Protocol Suite. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TCP/IP>

As you read about popular programs

Online Connection Problems - cont'd from Pg 2

instead of your machine or network. Look at the lights on all your networking devices. Is everything blinking (or not) as it should, in the appropriate colors? Most routers and modems are well-labeled, and the color codes are pretty intuitive. Solid green is always good. Anything red is almost always bad. Blinking can go either way. Again, check the users guide if you're not sure what you should be looking for.

Whether or not anything appears awry, cut the power to the modem and the router and restore power in that order. Just as with rebooting the PC, restarting network hardware will often resolve whatever problem they're having. If you can't bring the connection back online, and you've confirmed that your internal network is working, call your ISP's (Internet service provider's) help desk. There may be a service outage in your area or they may be able to diagnose a problem specific to your line. ♠

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such as Web browser Firefox and email client Thunderbird, you may have wondered how to use them with AOL. The first step, of course, is to download and install them.

Firefox is simplest to use. If AOL is your Internet connection, sign on. Then start Firefox and it will find and use your Internet connection, whether it's broadband or dialup. You can minimize AOL to reduce screen clutter and simply see your new browser. Explore Firefox's powerful options and add-ons which let you tailor your browsing experience as you prefer. And you can import your AOL favorite Web sites list. http://kb.mozilla.org/Firefox:_FAQs:_Importing_Opera_Bookmarks

To use Thunderbird, visit AOL Help, <http://help.aol.com/>, and enter "thunderbird" in the text window.

A top article, "How to Use Mozilla Thunderbird to Read and Send AOL or AIM E-mail", gives very detailed illus-

trated instructions.

The process for using other Internet software with AOL is similar: Find, download, install, and customize it, following instructions and tips from the software's source, AOL, and the Internet community. As always, Google is your friend: Googling the name of the software you're interested in together with "AOL" will usually find plenty of detailed instructions for making them work together. ♠

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Thousands of free Microsoft Word tips can be found online at <http://word.tips.net>.

Microsoft Word

Jumping Back In A Long Document

If you are editing a long document and you need to temporarily refer to another place in the document, you can use this tip to make yourself more productive. There are two ways you can jump back and forth in your document.

Method 1

First, you can use the scroll bars to view the other parts of the document. The insertion point (the blinking bar that indicates where your typing will appear) is still at your old editing position, even though it is off-screen. When you are through viewing the part of the document you needed to refer to, press one of the arrow keys or any printable character (including the SPACE BAR). You will be taken back to the exact place you were editing. Of course, if you pressed a printable character you will need to delete it.

Method 2

The other method is to use **SHIFT+F5**. This key combination is used to jump to the last three places in the document where you made edits. (Actually, it is four locations if you count the one where you first pressed **SHIFT+F5**.) You can press it once and you will return to where you were most recently editing.

Microsoft Excel

Rounding To Even And Odd Values

Excel includes two functions that allow you to quickly round a number up to the next highest even or odd integer values.

Even

For instance, suppose you have the value 26.3 in cell A7, and the following in cell A9: **=EVEN(A7)**. The value returned by this function is 28, which is the next highest even integer value.

Odd

The following function will return a value of 27, which is the next highest odd value: **=ODD(A7)**. If the value in A7 were negative, then both the ODD and EVEN functions will return values that are further away from zero than the value used as an argument (but they are still odd and even).

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CTPC MEETINGS

The CTPC meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month (not the last) except for December when there is no meeting. E-mail Editor@CTPC.org for information.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual membership dues are \$25.00 (payable to CPC). Partial year memberships will be charged at the rate of \$2.00 per month. Send your check to CTPC, PO Box 291, New Canaan CT 06840.

Please also provide your e-mail address so that we can send you meeting announcements each month.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

1. All members will receive an e-mail notice during December requesting their dues payment.
2. Members whose checks have not been received by early February will be reminded once by mail.
3. Since we really would like to have you as a member, the Membership Chairman will try one last time with another e-mail in early March.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the CTPC or its members.

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NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The CTPC newsletter is a monthly publication of the Connecticut Personal Computer User's Group (CTPC). Information is drawn from both the member-

ship of the CTPC and other user group newsletters. Its intent is to inform members of meetings and provide them with other information related to the use of their computers.

SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES

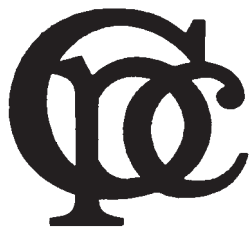
Articles for the CTPC newsletter may be submitted by e-mailing the editor at Editor@CTPC.org. Please include the article in the body of the e-mail and attach it as a simple ASCII, rtf or Word file (any version). The deadline for material is the second Tuesday of the month.

REPRINTING OF ARTICLES

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ADVERTISING RATES

The CTPC newsletter does not accept advertising.



Connecticut Personal Computer User's Group
P.O. Box 291
New Canaan, CT 06840

HERE'S WHERE THE MEETING WILL BE

Norwalk Transit District Offices 275 Wilson Avenue Norwalk, CT

From the North

Connecticut Turnpike to Exit 15 (Exit forks at the top, take right fork. Take the left fork at the bottom of the ramp). Left onto West Ave. at Fourth traffic light, about .5 mile, bear right onto Martin Luther King Drive for 1.8 miles to 7th traffic light. Left at light onto Wilson Avenue (Rte. 136) then .4 mile to facility on left.

From the South

Connecticut Turnpike to Exit 14 (Fairfield Avenue). Right at the end of the ramp onto Fairfield Avenue. Continue for .4 miles (second traffic light) to Martin Luther King Drive Right on Martin Luther King Drive. Continue on Martin Luther King Drive for 1.6 miles to 5th light. Left at light onto Wilson Avenue (Rte. 136) then .4 mile to facility on left.

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