

Nybbles & Bytes



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The Presidents Desk -



President's Message

By Lee Gerber

After a great presentation from Bill Jelen (Mr. Excel) I'm wondering how many of you rushed out to buy Microsoft Office 2007 or Microsoft Excel 2007. I suppose I should so that I can keep up with the latest and greatest, but frankly, I'm happy with Office 2003. I'm sure that down the line I'll bite the bullet and spend some of that cash I have stored in an old sock for the purchase of Office 2007. Hmm... or should I wait for the next version????

Are all you sports fans eagerly awaiting March Madness? Me? I'm waiting for the "boys of summer" or maybe just summer.

I haven't heard any comments from those of you who have bought or received new computers. Please use our Forum and let the rest of us know your likes and dislikes regarding the hardware and or software of your new machine.

Log in to our web site for the latest updates on our event calendar and don't forget to use the "Forum" for any questions or comments. Remember, first initial and last name plus your password. If you don't remember the password click the button and Dick will send it to your email address.

Spring is right around the corner. ***March 8th Daylight Savings begins.***

Webmaster Bulletin -

Dick Rose



I hope all of you are watching "Site Activities" page on our website to see any changes that I make listed in chronological order.

Letter from the Editor -

David A. Vydra



If you are still clinging to XP, be sure you have done your due diligence and installed the latest updates as well as Service Pack 3 (SP3). Also, if you have not installed the Malicious Software Removal Tool, I urge you to do so. If you have had applications that stopped responding have you reported it to Microsoft when you were asked to? You really should.

Vista users: It is expected that Service Pack 2 (SP2) for Vista will be released shortly. Watch for it and install it promptly

The final version of Internet Explorer 8 (IE8) is also heading for release. Most likely it will be this month. If you are not sure you should install it, check it out at Microsoft.com. There is increased security and some very useful features. I have been using the beta version for many months. A great feature is Accelerators. With accelerators you can start searching, mapping, emailing, and translating from the page you're already on without navigating to other web-sites.



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

Where were we when we left off last month? Ah yes, this month we will cover production applications and peripherals. (I love the word "Peripherals"! At least from the time I learned how to spell it.) But first a brief re-cap.

We covered what a computer is. Mainly a box constructed of metal and plastic with various parts made of plastic, metal, chemicals and silicon (Note correction, silicon and not silicone.). Also, there are wires and cables. A good bit of confusing wiring and cabling within the interior. The end result being, a very adequate door stop. And, we covered the need to install an operating system (OS) to provide functionality. Still, with our hardware (the computer) and our OS installed, we have not reached a point of usability. To reach this point we will cover production Applications and peripherals.

1. What are Production Applications?

ANS: Production Applications come in many flavors. Each one is designed to perform a specific task. Some are simple in their design and function. Others are more complex and allow for a multitude of scenarios. Some work with text, some with numbers while others handle graphics. As functionality grew we saw the arrival of audio applications as well as movies. There was the onset of the internet which required an application to interface with web sites.

If we were to begin listing all of the possible applications available, we would be here for a week. However, the main bodies of applications are those that allow us to create. We are able to create documents and letters using a word processor. We track our dollars and our goods with spreadsheet applications. There are data-base applications for tracking people, places and things. Graphic applications allow us to save and edit photos from whatever source we have. Audio-Visual applications provide the ability to edit videos and audio files. Viewing and sending email is easy using applications designed specifically for this function. But, regardless of the application, there is some learning involved. To do the simple things, there is little to learn. For the more complex, the curve extends ever upward.

When the era of personal computing began, there was little to fear of the outside world. We worked away doing whatever it was we desired. Alas, the internet changed all of this. The malicious folks began to hit their stride. At first it was mostly people that wanted to prove a point or that they could do what could not be done. More aggravation than harm. Then, as the internet grew in reach, we had to begin to protect ourselves. So that now we have augmented production applications with security applications.. Anti this, anti that! Firewalls to prevent outside intrusion. I should also mention specialty applications which allow us to use certain functions required to use specific types of files.

Irrespective of any applications need or use, there is always the need to update and patch. In today's world, safety is the watchword before usability. No application has value if it is not safe to use. So, lets say that you have your OS, your production applications and now your security applications all installed when you first plug in your computer. What do you really have? Why it is a box that hums and hums! Still a dumb box. What we need now are peripherals.

What are Peripherals?

Ans: Peripherals are devices that provide needed input and output for you computer. To begin, there are the input devices such as:

1. **Keyboard;** this allows you to tell the computer what you want it to do. You can give it commands using a combination of key-strokes. This has been a universal function since the onset of the first operating system. The original key-strokes have been retained and others have been added. The keyboard also allows for the input of data into the various applications. The basic keyboard was just letters and numbers with a few special purpose keys. It was modeled after a standard typewriter. With the passage of time and OS or application capability, other special function keys have been added. Today, the standard keyboard will have 101 keys. If you count the upper case there are even more. The keyboard will allow you to work within any application and perform any included function. The combination key-strokes are commonly called the "Short-cut Keys". With there being so many as well as the ability for you to add additional short-cut keystrokes it is difficult to remember many of them. Just try to keep in mind that the "ALT" key is the most primary. Every application has a menu. The combination of the Alt key and any underlined letter in the menu will open the drop down box for that particular menu item. Then it is just a matter of using the arrow keys to navigate to what you want and using the Enter key. Prior to the advent of the "Graphical User Interface" or GUI which is Windows, this was the only method of navigation. Our next peripheral is the result of Windows being created. It is the "Mouse".
2. **Mouse;** A simple little device. The name mouse was chosen because of it being a squat bodied item with a long tail. Over time, there have been design and form changes. The basic mouse has two buttons, one left and one right. Each has a specific function with the left one being the widest ranging. The right button is more restricted. Moving the mouse causes a pointer to move about the screen to a desired position. Pressing or "Clicking" the left mouse button will initiate an action. Some actions require a double click of the left button. Pressing or clicking the right mouse button will initiate the appearance of a drop down menu. Items in this menu are then selected and clicked with the left button to again initiate an action. Excessive mouse usage has been linked to an affliction known as Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. With this in mind, it should be part of your regimen to use the keyboard for navigation whenever possible.
3. **Other devices;** the most common of the other devices is the scanner. A scanner is used to make a hard copy of any item usable in the computer. Pictures can be scanned, saved as graphics and adjusted using a Photo editing application. Documents can be scanned and be saved as graphics or as documents if they have been subjected to an OCR (Optical Character Recognition) application. Once passed through OCR and saved as a document, editing may be performed. Digital cameras are now used as input devices. Photos are directly downloaded to the computer. Prior to this, photos had to be scanned or, once the service was available, processed to a floppy disk or CD. I might mention that even though floppy drives, CD drives and DVD drives are essentially hardware, they all serve as input/output devices as well. Today, most input devices are more universal because of the advent of the USB (Universal Serial Bus) interface. Newer input/output devices are being developed on a continual basis. Items such as "Thumb Drives" and large capacity hard drives as well as "Smart Digital" cards. So much more to learn.

Next we cover Output Peripherals

1. **Output Peripherals;** the main output peripheral is the monitor. Without a monitor everything else is pretty much an expensive dust collector. There has been a sea change of improvement in monitors over the years. The original monitors were CRT (Cathode Ray Tubes) black and white. Some were black and green or orange. As Windows became the OS of choice, color monitors were offered as an option. 14" was pretty much the norm. But, as demand increased the view size was increased to 15", 17", 19" and 21". For some specialty users the size went to 27". Of course, these were exceptional and extremely expensive. Today, the norm is the LCD (Liquid Crystal Diode) monitor construction. CRT monitors have been pigeon-holed to special use. LCD monitors offer greater functionality with the introduction of "touch screen" capability and applications for the casual user. Another output peripheral is the printer. The printer has evolved from the dot matrix pin printer with ribbon sheet feeders to ink jet, laser and solid ink printers. Dot matrix pin printers were pretty much limited to black printing. Although several were available which were capable of printing in colors. Ink jet printers were black only in their onset but quickly graduated to color capability. Laser printers were relegated to business initially and were black only. As the technology progressed, color lasers were developed. Cost pretty much limited their adoption to the business world. Prices have now fallen to the point that the average user can afford to have a color laser printer. Although, ink jets are less expensive and remain the predominant type. The best color printing is done with solid ink printers. However, they are still a bit pricey. Speakers for sound are nice to have output devices. It is possible to have a sound system that will put your stereo to shame. And, perhaps, drive your neighbors to distraction! The latest output peripheral is your Digital TV. Many newer computers are capable of connecting to the latest HDTV systems. Older computers can be upgraded with video cards which will interface with your HDTV.

That is it!

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Members Podium -



All Members

Submitted by:

David A. Vydra

At the beginning of January, it was my privilege to deliver a Toshiba Satellite Pro to a client. It had a full keyboard including key pad, 17" screen and web camera. This was regarded as a business model and came with Vista Business pre-installed. This customer was new to computers and Vista was not the desired option. Unlike some manufacturers, Toshiba includes a recovery disk. This disk also includes WindowsXP and downgrade rights so that the unit may be converted to XP. Although, some of the features included with Vista are lost.

However, doing the downgrade conversion was not without its problems. The recovery disk has instructions for doing the recovery. Unfortunately, these instructions were strictly for recovering the original factory image. There was not word one on how to do the downgrade. So, it became a matter of trial and error. My first step was to do as recommended. I had hoped there would be the opportunity to select WindowsXP. Not so lucky. My second step was to wipe the hard drive and start from step one. Wrong! At this point, calling Toshiba would have been a wise move. After all, having a more direct Tech support number would have made it easy. But, this would have been like reading the book. So, I followed the last miss with making the Optical Drive bootable. That got me to where I wanted to go. Only, XP cannot be written over a higher existing OS. So, I wiped the hard drive again and voila' we were in business. We now had a fully functional WindowsXP Notebook. All that was needed was to add an AV product and a Firewall product. For safe measure, CCleaner was also added. A happy customer!

There you have it. Like all things in PC land, there is much to learn. The trick now is to remember the lesson. And, another lesson is; if you think it is possible to do on or with a computer, it most likely can be done. It is just a matter of finding the right method and retention. I am sure that many of you have had a similar experience. Be it with a PC, printer or any other device or software. We hope you will share your adventures with your fellow members.




March 2009

Event_Date	Event
03/10	<p>*** COMPUTER FUNDAMENTALS OPEN FORUM *** MORNING SESSION. NORTHEAST OHIO PC CLUB (NEOPC) - 9:30AM FAIRVIEW PARK SENIOR CENTER -FUNDAMENTALS OF COMPUTER USE - ANY AND ALL TOPICS DISCUSSED - BRING A QUESTION, BRING A TOPIC - GUESTS ALWAYS WELCOME - ALWAYS COFFEE - FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH.</p>
03/11	<p>NORTHEAST OHIO PC CLUB (NEOPC) - GENERAL MEETING - PORTER PUBLIC LIBRARY, 27333 CENTER RIDGE ROAD, WESTLAKE OH. 6:30PM SOCIAL (PASTRIES AND BEVERAGE), 7:00PM CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS, 7:15PM MAIN PROGRAM FOR THE EVENING WILL BE "GETTING AND STAYING ON TRACK WITH MONEY" BY JAY SEATON / CCC SERVICES. JAY'S TALK INCLUDES PRACTICAL MONEY SECRETS THAT WORK EVEN TODAY AND HE ALSO DISCUSSES CONSUMER PROBLEMS WITH MORTGAGE, CREDIT CARDS, CREDIT SCORE AND BANKRUPTCY;8:30PM RAFFLE AND DOOR PRIZES.</p>
03/19	<p>MARCH 19, 2009 LADIES ONLY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP AT WESTLAKE PORTER PUBLIC LIBRARY FROM 2:00 P.M. TO 3:30 P.M. THE LIBRARY IS LOCATED AT 27333 CENTER RIDGE ROAD, WESTLAKE, OHIO. ALL LADIES ARE INVITED, WHETHER OR NOT MEMBERS OF NEOPC. COME WITH YOUR QUESTIONS AND/OR COMMENTS ABOUT SOFTWARE YOU HAVE.</p>
03/25	<p>FINAL DAY TO SUBMIT "MEMBERS PODIUM" ARTICLES FOR NEXT MONTHS NEWSLETTER</p>
03/26	<p>NEOPC/CAGG COMPUTER CLASS ORIENTATION MEETING - TUESDAY, MARCH 26TH, 10:00 AM - IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN ANY OF THE (FREE) CLASSES WE CONDUCT AT THE FAIRVIEW SENIOR CENTER YOU NEED TO ATTEND ONE OF THESE MONTHLY MEETINGS TO DETERMINE WHICH CLASS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE INVITED TO.</p>

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