

# McHenry County Computer Club

*USERS GROUP FOR PC-COMPATIBLE SYSTEMS*



*APRIL 2008*  
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The **April 2008** meeting of the McHenry County Computer Club is **April 12**, at the Salvation Army Building, 290 W. Crystal Lake Ave., in Crystal Lake. Enter the building at the parking level double door under the awning. The treasurer will be there by 8:30 AM for Club financial transactions.

#### Membership

Our membership is \$26.00 a year. **NOTE:** This fee offsets the running of the club; membership benefits include help with computer problems. Please pay Lyle Giese, our treasurer, or the designated Board Member in his absence.

Meetings : 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month.

**N.B.: The Salvation Army has asked us not park in front of the dumpsters or in other designated spaces. Your vehicle is subject to towing if it is not parked in the appropriate spaces.**

#### Meeting Agenda

09:00 General Business Meeting  
09:15 Demo: Helicopter follow-up  
10:00 Break  
10:15 Q&A

The Newsletter is published monthly by McHenry County Computer Club, online.

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Direct inquiries, comments, articles to the Editor to Lucë at [info@Mc3ComputerClub.org](mailto:info@Mc3ComputerClub.org)

Direct technical questions to MC3 at: [info@Mc3ComputerClub.org](mailto:info@Mc3ComputerClub.org)

MC3 website: <http://www.mc3computerclub.org/>

#### UPCOMING DEMOS

*May*            Thumb Drives

Suggestions from members for future demos would be appreciated.

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Al Davidson ; Dan Weise

*The editor wishes to thank all of the contributors to the April issue: Jack Luff, Shirley Teetsov, Bob Wagner, Lyle Giese, Dan Weise, and Jim Bierle.      Lucë*

### U3 Flash Drives

*by Jack Luff*

There has been a fair bit of development of programs that run from a flash drive without affecting the host computer in any way. The U3 approach is a semi-commercial implementation of this. It is sponsored by the SanDisk company and has been picked up by some other flash drive manufacturers.

When you insert a U3 flash drive, the U3 Launchpad is typically run. This gives you access to the programs that have been installed on the flash drive. It also gives you access to the U3 settings.

If you are not interested in the U3 features of the flash drive, you have two choices: you can disable the autorun of the Launchpad, or you can delete the U3 features entirely. These are both choices under the Settings on the Launchpad. (You can also manually reformat the flash drive to accomplish the latter. However, there is a small read-only partition on a U3 flash drive and this probably would have to be addressed separately under a manual reformat.)

Unless you really need the space, I would suggest disabling autorun as your first choice. This gives you the option of using the full U3 features in the future if you want. The Launchpad can be run manually if not deleted, the same as any other executable program. The rest of the flash drive space is available to you as in a normal flash drive.

A few programs come preloaded with the Launchpad on a U3 flash drive and one of the choices from the main Launchpad screen is to add more programs. Making this choice takes you to the U3 web site where a number of free programs and programs for purchase are available. I had purchased a 2 gig U3 flash drive to see what the fuss was all about. I downloaded a number of the free programs, giving me 30 in total. They occupy only 287 mb or 14% of the flash drive. These programs include Avast! Antivirus and Skype preinstalled and Mozilla, Weather Bug, Open Office and Irfan View (graphics viewer) downloaded.

Other people have addressed running programs from a flash drive, many for free, and there seems little to recommend in the U3 approach, unless, of course, you already have a U3 drive, or there is one or more of the programs for purchase that are of interest to you. A quick review of the weekend sale flyers revealed no specific U3 drives. However, over 50 were available on Amazon. With the prices of flash drives varying widely between sale and regular prices, it is hard to say if you pay a premium for a U3 drive. I expect it is the sale of the programs for purchase that is keeping U3 drives going.

In preparing this note, I took another look at my U3 flash drive and the U3 web site - it had been six months or so since I had used my U3 drive. My reaction is that there was a lot more material available for a fee, but little new available for free. It also seemed that a couple of basic free versions had been replaced with enhanced versions for a fee.

## Interesting Info

Here is a little something I just came across.

For those of you who remember when Vista first came out, one was required to have a legal copy of XP or 2000, or at least that is what we were lead to believe. There is a back door to installing Vista on a clean machine and if I remember correctly, I might have posted it to the MC3 newsletter. If I didn't, I will document it again and post it next month. But for now, that trick is also available in the new Vista SP1 upgrade that was just released. This means that you can install the Vista SP1 Upgrade version and get a complete Vista Full Version without actually paying the full version price. I have included below the cost chart showing the savings one can get by only getting the Vista SP1 Upgrade package only.

United States (in U.S. \$\$)	<u>Full edition</u>	<u>Upgrade edition</u>
Vista Home Premium	\$ 239	\$ 130
Vista Business	\$ 299	\$ 199
Vista Ultimate	\$ 320	\$ 220

***Here is something else I found that the members just might want to do and it is harmless.***

### **Install Vista's fonts on XP – legally**

Why Vista's new fonts are really worth getting.

Windows Vista brings six brand-new fonts to our screens and printers. Included are three sans-serif fonts (Calibri, Candara, and Corbel), a pair of serif fonts (Cambria and Constantia), and one monospaced font (Consolas).

The free Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack for Word, Excel and PowerPoint 2007 File Formats gives older versions of Office (2000, XP, and 2003) the ability to open, edit, and save files in the newer Office 2007 formats.

The Compatibility Pack includes all six of Microsoft's new ClearType fonts. Installing the pack is a totally free and completely legal way to get just the fonts. Best of all, the fonts remain on your machine for use by any application, even if you uninstall the pack.

### **Installing the pack to get the Vista fonts**

To install the Office Compatibility Pack, go to the Microsoft download page and click the button

labeled Download. The file, which was released in a revised version on Mar. 6, is a 27.5MB download.

Double-click on the downloaded file, which is called **FileFormatConverters.exe**. The install takes a minute or two.

When the installer finishes, you can verify immediately that the Calibri, Cambria, Candara, Consolas, Constantia, and Corbel fonts are available in every Windows application. Simply pull down the Format menu and select Fonts in any application that supports fonts.

If you just want the new typefaces, and you don't really want to keep the converters installed, you can open the **Control Panel** and use **Add or Remove Programs** to uninstall them immediately. But there's no downside to having the add-in installed.

*Contributed by Bob Wagner*

## Spybot on Vista

The Vista users (both of you) maybe having trouble using the latest version of Spybot Search and Destroy, at least I was. For some reason Spybot didn't think I was the administrator of my own PC. After searching the Spybot help page I found a solution to my problem. Open Spybot with a right click, and one of the choices is Run as administrator. Left click it then programs opens and run great with Vista.

*Contributed by Jim Beierle*

## Questions & Answers

**Q: I have a netscape.com address and used to use <http://netscape.com> to retrieve my email, but that doesn't work any more.**

A: AOL owns Netscape and moved Netscape.com email into its AOL mail servers. Use <http://my.screenname.aol.com> to retrieve your email. Login with your full Netscape email address and password.

**Q: On a WinXP system I get a screen called XP Antivirus 2008. I did a search for it and deleted one file, but I still get this screen.**

A: The new viruses/trojans/spyware (including this one) cannot be removed while booted into Windows on that drive. Adam and I are finding that we need to remove the hard drive and put it in a working system as the second drive and virus scan it there to get rid of the new ones.

**Q: Does Vista need activation from Microsoft?**

A: Yes, but it can be done over the phone via a toll free number.

**Q: Where does Firefox store its favorites (Bookmarks)?**

A: In bookmarks.html or bookmarks.htm, depending on what you upgraded from. Just search for a file called bookmarks.\*.

## Computers Woes and Joys

Last spring my husband and I visited our daughter in New Hampshire. Her husband had purchased a new computer. He offered his old one to my husband. He said that the hard drive had gone but that everything else was fine.

We brought it home and I spoke with my nephew, Lem. He said to get a hard drive and he would change them so I got the drive. Lem opened the computer and pulled out one of the two drives in there and bingo! -- that computer worked just fine. Lem did a little trading of things inside. (My son-in-law likes to have his war fighting games on the computer but my husband does not do those games. His thing is reading the Estonian newspapers, talking with his friends in Estonia, and playing card games.)

My daughter took all day Monday and a couple of hours on Tuesday getting the computer set up. My husband now has his own e-mail address on Outlook Express and hotmail. Of course, he kept saying, "Are my pictures and games on there?" Good grief, Charlie Brown, the world wasn't made in a minute! And although he refuses to do anything with getting things working, he does manage to use Skype for conversations with his friends in Estonia and has learned to use his camera on the computer. Seems to me this is another one of those choosing to or not to, which ever is easier.

Of course, my daughter asked what had to be done to the computer and I said Lem pulled one drive and it worked. Mind you, that computer was not that old and he has gotten a new one. She wasn't too happy about the simple solution but then said he had wanted a new one anyway. Wish I were a little fly on the wall when she confronts him about it.

*Contributed by Shirley Teetsov*

## Remote Motherboard Change-out

My 87-year-old Dad lives in Arizona. He loves putzing with his PC's that he has a home network. His main PC is a 2-3-year-old 2Ghz XP box, networked to an 850 MHz former Win98 upgraded to XP box, and a hand-me-down Dell laptop.

On Monday he calls me in a panic. His main PC is absolutely dead. Dark screen, no post beeps, nothing. He still has internet access from the second PC, so I have him find an ATX power supply pin out diagram and check the power supply voltages. With the power supply plugged in, drawing whatever the load, all voltages are reasonable. So the problem is likely either the Motherboard or processor. We agreed to assume it was the motherboard, and go for a motherboard replacement.

The box had been a Tiger Direct 'kit', literally, a 'kit' of parts that one assembles. So his motherboard had come with a manual which he had available. That was a big help. With the manual we had a motherboard name, MachSpeed, its model number, and its specs to work with without an arduous web hunt (some motherboards have no markings or cryptic markings as to mfg or model). So we knew which processor socket it had, and what kind of memory it used. His hard drives were IDE drives with the flat cables. He needed a motherboard for an Athlon processor that fits 939 socket and his particular style memory.

So I search ebay for 939 but get too many hits. I narrow the search by searching for 'Machspped 939' and up pops a retail boxed motherboard of that brand name and socket. It's being sold by a computer parts seller who has included a good listing of the motherboard features.

My Dad is old-school and rarely buys things over the 'net, so he isn't fluent in 'ebay'. But I coach him over the phone, having him search ebay using the same search terms so he gets the same search results. He saves the link, so he can get back to it, and prints out the page of specs so he can compare them to the specs for his board, making sure that it'll take the same memory chips he already has. After he does that, he calls back 10 minutes later and says the board will take the memory chips he has. The replacement board is a little bit faster than the original, but has one less PCI slot on it. Since he has no PCI card in his PCI slots now, has 4 empty PCI slots, and is unlikely to need even one peripheral that requires a PCI card, that's not an issue.

So, he buys the board, which is an eBay 'buy-it-now'. That was an ordeal because he didn't remember either his eBay password or PayPal password from a year ago when he last used those, and didn't have them written down.

On Friday, the board arrives by UPS. It's slightly different dimensions, a little less wide, but the mounting standoffs are in the same place. The wiring hooks up OK.

On power-up he gets a message that due to system changes, he has to 're-certify' this system with Microsoft, with the message offering a phone number and a web link to do so. He calls the toll free 888 phone number and gets an automated attendant, which provides 9 sets of numbers for him to type into text entry boxes on the boot-up error message screen. At the conclusion, a message appears saying that the system is now certified and it proceeds to boot up. It did a number of driver installs, using drivers from the CD included with the new motherboard.

So Dad's up and running and pleased as punch with his new motherboard, although he can't detect that it's any faster than the former one.

He's using one of the LaserJet 4 printers that were offered to the club for senior citizens a year or so ago, (Dick Hoppe helped me fix a stuck paper presence detection switch and I UPS'd it to him). He loves it because it's such a low cost-per-page printer. He prints out a fair number of web pages to read, because he finds it difficult to read text on a screen, so keeping the cost of printing down is important to him. He says 'Thank you' for the Laserjet printer.

*Contributed by Dan Weise*

## Kingston Flash Drives

In my presentation last November that included flash drives, I mentioned that there were a number of flash drives being sold for premium prices, that I had no experience with such devices and that it was not clear to me exactly what you got for your extra money. To help answer this question, I reviewed the 4 gig flash drives currently offered by Kingston. This is what I found.

I found ten models, five of the "standard" variety and five premium models to varying degrees. The prices listed are all from one web site. Shipping charges probably would be additional if you wanted to purchase one of the standard models. All models work with Macs, but generally not any included software.

**DataTraveler 100**, \$17.55: Listed as working with Vista, but not ReadyBoost. Capless - the USB connector can be protected within case.

**DataTraveler Hi-Speed**, \$18.99: Data transfer rates of up 6MB/sec. read and up to 3MB/sec write are specified.

This is one of the drives from the demo. I had found speeds greater than these, but there were somewhat inconsistent across the area of the drive.

This drive is not “capless,” but the cap can be attached tightly to the “other” end of the drive when it is not protecting the USB connection. It is unclear whether this is the case with all Kingston “cap” drives.

**DataTraveler 110 Hi-Speed**, \$20.99: capless, did not find any speeds listed.

**DataTraveler Mini Fun**, \$21.75: Comes preloaded with two puzzle games. Comes in a “fun” shape. Smaller in size (1.5” vs. 2.5”).

**DataTraveler Mini Migo Edition**, \$21.99: Smaller in size, Capless, Migo software syncs e-mail and browser settings and files between the drive and a computer on a Windows system, multi-language. (More complete Migo version below.)

**DataTraveler 400 Hi-Speed**, \$40.99: Data transfer rates of up to 20MB/sec. read and 10MB/sec. write listed. Labeled as Readyboost compatible - no mention, positive or negative, on four models above. Expanded version of Migo sync software included. Also SecureTraveler security software for Windows.

**DataTraveler II Plus - Migo Edition**, \$69.99: Read Speed of 19MB/sec and Write Speed of 13MB/sec listed. DataTraveler II Plus security and partitioning software included. Also Migo sync software.

**DataTraveler HyperX Super Hi-Speed**, \$73.99: Data transfer rates of 30MB/sec. read and 20MB/sec. write listed. Capless. No extra features listed.

**DataTraveler Secure**, \$135.00: Data transfer rates of up to 24 MB/sec. read and up to 10 MB/sec. write listed. Includes MyDataZone access security software and My Traveler file management software for Windows. Has a waterproof rating.

**DataTraveler Secure - Privacy Edition**, \$138.00: Data transfer rates of up to 24 MB/sec. read and up to 10 MB/sec. write listed. All stored data is protected by 256-bit Advanced Encryption Standard hardware-based encryption system. Has a waterproof rating. No included software listed.

*Contributed by Jack Luff*

Some of you may have seen this next bit of humor, but it still might tickle your funny bone again, so here it is:

## **Smart Cowboy**

A cowboy named Bud was overseeing his herd in a remote mountainous pasture in California when suddenly a brand-new BMW advanced out of a dust cloud towards him.

The driver, a young man in a Brioni suit, Gucci shoes, RayBan sunglasses and a YSL tie, leans out the window and asks the cowboy, 'If I tell you exactly how many cows and calves you have in your herd, will you give me a calf?'

Bud looks at the man, obviously a yuppie, then looks at his peacefully grazing herd and calmly answers, 'Sure, Why not?'

The yuppie parks his car, whips out his Dell notebook computer, connects it to his Cingular BLUETOOTH cell phone, and surfs to a NASA page on the Internet, where he calls up a GPS satellite to get an exact fix on his location which he then feeds to another NASA satellite that scans the area in an ultra-high-resolution photo.

The young man then opens the digital photo in Adobe Photoshop and exports it to an image processing facility in Hamburg, Germany.

Within seconds, he receives an email on his Palm Pilot that the image has been processed and the data stored. He then accesses a MS-SQL database through an ODBC connected Excel spreadsheet with email on his Blackberry and, after a few minutes, receives a response.

Finally, he prints out a full-color, 150-page report on his hi-tech, miniaturized HP LaserJet printer and finally turns to the cowboy and says, 'You have exactly 1,586 cows and calves.'

'That's right. Well, I guess you can take one of my calves,' says Bud.

He watches the young man select one of the animals and looks on amused as the young man stuffs it into the trunk of his car.

Then the Bud says to the young man, 'Hey, if I can tell you exactly what your business is, will you give me back my calf?'

The young man thinks about it for a second and then says, 'Okay, why not?'

'You're a Congressman for the U.S. Government,' says Bud.

'Wow! That's correct,' says the yuppie, 'but how did you guess that?'

'No guessing required.' answered the cowboy. 'You showed up here even though nobody called you; you want to get paid for an answer I already knew, to a question I never asked. You tried to show me how much smarter than me you are; and you don't know a thing about cows...this is a herd of sheep. . .

'Now give me back my dog.'