

McHENRY COUNTY COMPUTER CLUB

USERS GROUP FOR PC-COMPATIBLE SYSTEMS



APRIL 2009
VOLUME 26 No.

The April 2009 meeting of the McHenry County Computer Club is April 11, 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 : 2nd Saturday of the month.

Meeting Agenda

09:00 General Business Meeting
09:15 Break
09:30 Word (2003) - Bob Wagner
10:45 Q&A

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

Editor-in-Chief: Lucë York

Direct inquiries, comments, articles to the Editor to Lucë at info@Mc3ComputerClub.org

Please indicate that your email is for the editor.

Direct technical questions to MC3 at: info@Mc3ComputerClub.org

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

UPCOMING DEMOS

April WORD 2003 (tentative) - Bob Wagner
May Ghost (tentative) - Lyle Giese
June Excel - Jack Luff

MC³ OFFICIALS

President : Larry Freeman

lpfreeman@hotmail.com

Vice President : Bob Wagner rmwagner@ameritech.net
Secretary : Shirley Teetsov
Treasurer: Lyle Giese Lyle@lcrcomputer.com
Database Manager : Dan Weise
Newsletter Editor : Lucë York info@Mc3ComputerClub.org (for articles & suggestions ONLY)
Past President : John Katkus
Webmaster: Cindi Carrigan
Board Members : Jack Luff ; Dave Lutes ; Jim Bierle ; Bruce Eckersberg

Questions & Answers

Q: I have a laptop blue screen with a stop 0x00000050 in CLFS.SYS page_Fault_in_nonpaged_area. I was doing a Sys Restore when this happened. I am unable to start the laptop in any mode. Will Acronis Tru Image backup work for this state?

A: You will need to re-install Windows. You might get lucky with a repair install and not lose any data. As far as Acronis goes, I am not sure. It is designed to back up an entire drive like ghost. I do not have any experience using Acronis in this manner.

CLFS.SYS is a new way to create log files and was introduced in WinXP. It stands for Combined Log File System. Looking through Microsoft support and Google, several things can cause this problem and the surest way to get back is to do a repair install of Windows.

Q: I re-install HP Deskjet 970Cxi printer and WinXP keeps asking for the driver again and again and again...

A: You are probably turning off the printer and turning on the computer and then when you want to print, you turn on the printer and get asked at that time. WinXP is starting up, sees no printer on the USB ports and 'forgets' about the printer. Then you turn on the printer and it thinks it's a new device.

Q: I installed a new motherboard and had to re-install WinXP, but cannot install SP3. SP3 crashes and I have to re-install.

A: You probably are missing a hardware driver or have a hardware driver that is not compatible with SP3.

Q: When playing video with sound, the computer flashes a blue screen and goes black. Have to power off to reboot.

A: Your computer is set up to auto-reboot on a critical error and is unable to restart for some reason. To turn off auto restart, open Control panel in classic mode and double click on System. Then Advanced, then settings under Startup and Recovery. Uncheck Automatic restart under System Failure. Then you will see the error that is blue screening the computer and we can come up with a better answer. But it could be the video card driver or sound card driver causing this.

Q: Need a webcam recommendation...

A: Most any will work. There are some nice ones with a microphone also.

Q: What are your thoughts on using "Bit Torrent" for downloading?

A: Bit Torrent is a P2P (peer 2 peer) file sharing program. You are allowed to access someone else's computer to download programs/music/etc. If not careful, you could open your

own computer to others to access files on your computer. You are trusting that the files on some stranger's computer do not have viruses or trojans in them. And that is besides the copyright infringement issues that go along with this.

Q: I am trying to use the Save As function in Excel and try to save to my D drive and I get an incorrect Function error.

A: The D drive is probably a CD-ROM or DVD drive, and, unless it's preformatted to be a big floppy, that is the error I would expect. Also, depending on the version of Excel, it might not be smart enough to know about writing to a CD, and this would be the error you would get.

Q. Confused about firewalls... I don't really understand whether I need fire walls. My XP desktop uses DSL and has for a long time with a firewall, ZoneAlarm. I have had no problems. A short time ago I acquired a Toshiba XP laptop and a Linksys Router and a wireless card. I now have a network, I guess. I have a firewall in the laptop also. I was told that I don't need a firewall when using a router. Would that apply to both computers?

With the current warning about the April 1st virus (Conflicker), the 'experts' have been in the media with information. If you have all the updates of your antivirus, firewall and Windows, you are safe. Of if you have AT&T DSL, you are safe and you can continue to dance with the stars, I am up to date with everything.

So, do I need a firewall or not?

A: This is actually a series of questions and I will try to answer each of them.

A firewall is software (like ZoneAlarm) that will not allow un-authorized Internet traffic to enter your computer and also checks your outgoing Internet traffic. That means if a trojan or virus gets in and tries to "phone home," Zone Alarm will stop that unless the virus disables the firewall first. A home router does not examine or stop outbound Internet traffic, only incoming traffic to a minor degree.

Having a router with NAT does mean that SOME of the things Zone Alarm protects against won't touch your computer, but ONLY if the router is doing NAT and you only have one computer. Adding a second computer also means if you don't have a firewall on the computer, viruses and trojans can more easily travel between the two computers. A router with NAT does not stop email viruses or a bad website from downloading and installing malware on your computer!

And if you have the laptop working with an unsecured wireless, you are open to your neighbor or someone driving down the street getting into your laptop if you run without a firewall.

Yes, that does happen. Many people do it regularly - steal your Internet bandwidth if it's convenient to do so and think nothing of it. They could be downloading illegal material and you would be the one they come after since it was your Internet connection...

With or without a router doing NAT (very important distinction, it HAS to be doing NAT to provide any protection at all), a good firewall like ZoneAlarm is useful and I do recommend using ZoneAlarm. Also if you travel with your laptop, you would be open to whatever the others on the same wireless access point are doing without a good third party firewall like ZoneAlarm.

How do I know if my computer has the Conflicker (AKA DownAdup)? Try surfing to www.f-secure.com or to www.sans.org or www.symantec.com. This worm blocks access to these websites in an effort to prevent you from downloading new virus information into your antivirus program.

What will the Conflicker worm/trojan do on April 1st? No one really knows for sure except the people who created it. The experts only know that it will change behavior on April 1st. It will change behavior and do a much wider search for further instructions or updates. Yes, it's self-updating. It searches out computers on the Internet with the worm on it and if it finds a partner with a newer version of the worm, it downloads and updates itself from that new partner.

How do I know if my router is doing NAT (Network Address Translation)? Open a command

prompt window (Start -> Run -> type in CMD and then enter. You should have a black screen. Type ipconfig and hit the enter key. It will show you your computer's IP address. If your ip address starts with 10.x.x.x or 192.168.x.x or 172.(16-32).x.x, your router is doing NAT - which for the home user is a "Good Thing."

If you have AT&T DSL and a black Speedstream modem with the Internet light, do the above test and make sure you have one of the IP addresses above. If your ip address starts with anything else, your modem/router is NOT doing NAT and that opens your computer up to a lot more malicious traffic from the Internet trying to break into your computer. Get some professional assistance to fix that and check your computer for viruses and/or trojans!

Without NAT, in less than one hour, someone will be trying to hack into your computer. If you are missing one Windows Update, you are toast. Yes, it's now under one hour before an unprotected computer will get owned by a bot master.

One last question, how do you know that you are up to date on everything? Is Windows Update working? Or is it broken and just thinks that there are no updates to download? How do you know that your antivirus program is working and has the latest updates?

-

Excel Formulas and Errors

Excel formulas and functions make certain assumptions regarding their component parts. If these assumptions are not fulfilled, you will get an error message. For instance, if cell C1 contains the formula =A1*B1, it is expected that cells A1 and B1 are numeric. If either is not, you will get a #VALUE! error designation. (As has been noted previously, the formula works if either cell is null or "nothing", but not if a space has been entered. Unfortunately, both of these conditions look the same in Excel.) You might want to expand your formula to avoid these error messages in general, or in certain circumstances.

Excel 2007 added a function specifically for this general purpose. If the formula is written as =IFERROR(A1*B1,""), the results of the calculation will be displayed in cell C1 if there is no error, and the value will be displayed as null if there is an error. (The latter results from the pair of double quotes.) You could also display your own custom error message if appropriate, viz., =IFERROR(A1*B1,"Numbers Required, Dummy!"). This is a new function in Excel 2007 and would give a #NAME! error if used in an earlier version. This would also be the case if an Excel 2007 spreadsheet using this function is opened in an earlier version.

The required construction in Excel 2003 and most earlier versions is

=IF(ISERROR(A1*B1),"",A1*B1). The ISERROR function returns a Yes/No indicator whether there is an error or not and the IF function tests this indicator and chooses the result accordingly. However, you may want to tailor your testing to your specific situation. For instance, if column A is various amounts of monthly sales, that could be zero, and column B is a commission factor that is applied to these sales, the formula could be =IF(ISNUMBER(A1),A1*B1,""). The calculation is performed only if cell A1 is numeric (and not null). The #VALUE! error would still be returned if cell B1 is not numeric (or null), since it is expected that there would always be a valid value in appropriate areas of column B.

A similar formula to address division by zero would be =IF(B1=0,"",A1/B1). Note that the null is set if B1 is zero and the calculation performed if it is not.

Contributed by Jack Luff



The Editor impatiently anticipates articles for next month's (May's) issue, especially from those members who have not yet contributed to our newsletter. Thanks to Jack & Lyle for contributing to this issue. --*Lucë*