

McHenry County Computer Club

Users Group for PC-Compatible Systems



February 2010
Volume 27 No. 2

The [February 2010](#) meeting of the McHenry County Computer Club is [February 13](#), 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

- Introductions & Reports
- Demo – Mail Merge – Bob Wagner
- Q&A
- Coffee and Donuts are not free; please put donation into jar provided.

Bring your questions; if you can't attend, submit questions to our website address.

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

Editor-in-Chief: Lucë York ; Webmaster: Cindi Carrigan

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

- *January* Windows 7 ; Booting OS ...
- *February* Mail Merge – Bob Wagner
- *March* Extended Q&A; Kindle demo by Cindi Carrigan; Spring Party
- *April* Windows 2007 – Jack Luff
- *May* Clonezille – Lyle Giese
- *June* Flying "Copter – John Katkus ; possible laser printer demo by Dick Hoppe

If anyone has questions about gifts received at Christmas, please bring them in for the Q&A session.

N.B.: Suggestions for demo topics and volunteers for demos are always welcome.

Relevant articles and computer stories are also appreciated.

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Questions & Answers

Q: How effective/secure is it to password protect a word .doc?

A: First of all, it depends on the strength of the password used. If it's easily guessed, it's not worth using. Also, you can find password-cracking programs for office documents on the Internet.

Q: How secure is it to password your flash drive?

A: See above answer. Using a program like TrueCrypt and a strong password is actually better than password protecting a word document.

Using TrueCrypt, it's harder to guess the content of the flash drive to help guess the password. There are certain structures and words used in all word docs that allow the password-cracking programs to make some intelligent guesses at the password.

Q: My SKYPE drops out more often since I upgraded from Win2000 to WinXP. My broadband is well above the minimums required for Skype.

A: WinXP uses more resources than Win2000 and is the reason that the base mins for the OS are higher. No surprise there!

As far as your broadband goes, there are a ton of variables involved. Minimums are based on NO OTHER TRAFFIC. But your computer can and will be doing other things besides SKYPE all the time: checking for and downloads for your antivirus program, windows updates, Adobe (flash, reader, etc), and any other program that wants to auto-update itself.

Beyond that, how many other people are there using the broadband when you are? Wireless, and cable, uses shared bandwidth between your house and the tower or concentration in your neighborhood. How many others are using this shared resource? And then when you get to the head-end office, did your provider short change you with upstream bandwidth to the Internet?

And you run into all the same questions on the other end of the connection. And we run into the question that the DSL/Cable/Wireless modem goes bad and slows down your Internet slowly and gradually.

Are those enough variables?

Q: I have an intermittent problem using Firefox. Right click and right mouse button for highlight/cut and paste does not work properly all the time.

A: Bad mouse button? Your mouse may be going bad and this is the time you use the right button the most. USB mouse? Interrupts needed to run and watch the buttons are overloaded (USB Hard drive, USB mouse & keyboard, USB network adaptors), causing the computer to not always see the mouse clicks properly.

Too many add-on toolbars slowing down Firefox? We see too many add-on toolbars (3 or more) causing many problems - Google, Yahoo, antivirus, and others provide toolbars and many free programs try to push yet another toolbar to your browser.

Your computer has viruses and trojans eating up CPU time and slowing down the computer to the point mouse clicks are missed. There are many ways for this to happen, and it takes a bit of time to sort out and find the right path to happy clicking.

Q: What is the best way to copy one hard drive to a backup hard drive, running either Windows XP or Windows 7.

A: Windows XP and Windows 7 have backup programs included that can backup your hard drive to a file (like on an external hard drive). Or you can use programs like DeltaCopy or a commercial backup program.

Q: Is there a freeware speech to text application available?

A: WinXP does have speech recognition in it. See <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/306901>
In Win7 see: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows7/Set-up-Speech-Recognition>

Googling speech recognition will give you some more hints on using these tools. We noted that no one at the club meeting used either of these tools.

Q: I have a question that I have googled to find an answer, but no one has a direct answer. My daughter gave me nice little IBM ThinkPad, and she has lots of stuff on that I'm cleaning off. One item I found is a program called "BroadJup Client Foundation" I know I don't need it, but maybe it's something I can use.

A: That's installed as part of SBC's DSL install CD. Not needed and really was excess baggage on the CD along with all the Yahoo stuff they put on your computer with those CD's.

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## **Freeware**

*by Al Schrader*

I am now using Windows 7 after a clean install upgrade and I have reinstalled all my applications,

including some that are used less frequently than others. This includes a program I use named inSSIDer (<http://www.metageek.net/products/inssider>) when setting up a wireless router to check all of the nearby wireless routers in my neighborhood that could interfere with my network.

InSSIDer scans wi-fi signals and provides information in text and graphics format that is easy to understand. What I look for is signal strength, which hopefully my network has the strongest signal because it would be the nearest and a channel number (1 to 11) only used by my wireless router. What I found after scanning were 6 wireless access points: my wireless router was using channel #1 all by itself. But there was a stronger signal from an access point half a block away than the one right in my own house. So, thank goodness, he is using a different channel than what I use, otherwise I would have had problems.

I have used other programs (Netstumbler) that do virtually the same thing, except I had problems with using it in Vista and Windows 7. Also there's another named NetSurveyor 802.11 Network Discovery Tool, which is a little overkill  unless you're looking for a lot more detail. I'm giving inSSIDer a thumbs up and a must have utility.

## Computer Woes and Joys

I have many old movies, a lot without sound and a lot with sound. The oldest were first on old big reel tapes, which many years ago I had converted to VHS tapes. Well, those original cameras and the tape, in the 50s, were not all that good, but at least you had something to validate events that people, particularly children, will question you about. People seem to have a sort of dim memory in their minds of something that they recall or heard about or were told about and simply assumed that you were exaggerating or telling little white lies to cover up a non-event. Suspicious critters big and little that they are.

I have found that VHS tapes are not that dependable; they can either break or lose integrity. However, at the time, they were the best there was for people not of the superior wealthy echelon, so better than nothing.

Last summer I had a number of 8mm tapes and one very old, large reel put onto DVDs by a local merchant. That cost was staggering, and, needless to say, my husband does not know the amount that was involved. Heaven help me, if he did. One DVD that I received back from them had nothing

on it, and I still paid \$15 for it and could not even use the disk again. In case you were wondering, the camera used to take the movies was broken and fixing it was not guaranteed, so I had no way to know what was on any of the tapes.

That expensive adventure brought me to wonder if there was not some kind of “thing” that could convert VHS tapes onto DVD disks from your own home computer. After all, if a commercial company had something, why not you at home. I found such an item in a computer magazine for \$75 and told my nephew about it and asked him if indeed it did what it said it did. Then a couple of days later, Roxio, which I have on my computer, came up with an advertisement for the exact same item for \$60. Consulting my nephew again, as I frequently do, he said Best Buy had exactly the same thing that Roxio was offering for \$40. This was getting better and better.

There was no dust left by me as I went to Best Buy and under the speed limit as I usually drive. The greeter told me it was back in Home Entertainment. Asking back there they started showing me recording devices, no, no. They sent me to computers, the woman clerk followed me to make sure I got there and she asked the clerk there the whereabouts of said device. That clerk thought maybe in software. On the way to software we happened upon another clerk and asked the same question; he thought he knew where it might be and there it was. Thank you for the very long trip around a large store.

I have transferred one very old VHS tape to DVD and the quality is only as good as it was. Unfortunately, this can't be brought back by any simple and inexpensive way yet. This program is also supposed to be able to be stopped, some you don't want bypassed and started up again. So far, I have not been able to try that, takes time and concentration of which I don't have much anymore. It also, as a bonus, transfers LPs and Audio Tapes to CDs.

“It is Roxio easy VHS to DVD. Create DVD movies from your VHS tapes and Hi8 or V8 home videos. Start with your VHS player or camcorder, Connect to your PC, Capture, edit and share. Your collection of LPs and tapes to CDs or transfer them to portable players.”

That's the Joy part, the Woe part is why didn't I find out about this before Christmas and been able to put it on my Christmas list???

Part 2... *Later*

