

McHenry County Computer Club

USERS GROUP FOR PC-COMPATIBLE SYSTEMS



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The January 2008 meeting of the McHenry County Computer Club is January 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 : 2nd 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 Extended Q&A; Mail Merge (tentative); Holiday Party
10:45 Party Time!

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

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

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

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

I've decided to take a break from writing my column this month. I've nothing new to report on the library front, and I'm working on things at home that aren't ready for publication yet. A new set of Bose speakers figures into my current activities, as does a handheld voice recorder, which I can download to my computer. I did notice in the questions below one about IE7. I don't have it at home and refuse to have it on my computer at work, but the other computers at the library do have IE7. When I have to be at one of those computers, I can feel my blood pressure rise every time I have to use IE7. It is a royal pain in the neck (and other places). The interface itself is irritating. What is it with designers anyway? I'm sorry, no, I'm *not* sorry. I happen to be old-fashioned enough to subscribe to the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" philosophy. Hear! Hear! O you moronic designers of Vista and IE7!

Lucë

that holds your deleted images – until you have a recovery plan sorted out. If you take the memory card out of the camera, don't put it back in the camera. Some cameras automatically stick stuff on the card every time it's inserted.

PC Inspector – how to undelete for free

There are hundreds of programs available on the Internet that claim to undelete lost pictures on a camera. Most of them cost \$30, \$40, or more. Before buy an expensive package, take a look at a small, absolutely free alternative from a German company called Convar.

The program, called PC Inspector Smart Recovery, works almost every time, in testing (although installing it on a Vista computer may present a problem).

To use PC Inspector:

Step 1: Download [PC Inspector Smart Recovery 4.5](#). In Windows XP, double-click on the downloaded file to install the program. In Vista, right-click the file and choose Run as Administrator. The installer takes a while, so be patient.

Step 2: If you have a card reader attached to your PC, take the affected memory card out of your camera, flip the write-protect "lock" tab so nothing can be written to the card, and put it in the card reader. If you don't have a card reader, attach the camera to your PC with the appropriate cable. In either case, if Windows pops up and offers to do something for you (such as copying the files into your PC), click the X button to close the AutoPlay dialog box.

Step 3: Click Start, Programs (in Vista, it's All Programs), PC Inspector Smart Recovery. You get the PC Inspector Smart Recovery main dialog box.

Step 4: In the left pane, choose the drive that contains your camera's memory card, or choose the camera itself. This can be challenging because PC Inspector doesn't give you many details about the drives. But you can use Windows Explorer to find the correct drive letter.

Step 5: In the middle pane, choose the type of file you want to recover. Chances are good it's .jpg.

Step 6: In the right pane, navigate to a place where you would like to store the reconstituted files.

Step 7: Click Start. This will take a while, but you can watch the program's progress by looking at the folder that's being filled with recovered photos.

Step 8: When it's done, click the X button to get out of the program, flip the "lock" write protection tab back to its normal position, and put the card back in your camera. You're ready to snap away.

Questions & Answers

Q: PC with WinXP. Started to not load on startup. Power on and it gets stuck loading Windows and have to power on/off to get Windows loaded and running.

A: This sounds like hardware trouble of some kind. This machine will take some trouble-shooting to determine exact issue. Could be power supply, motherboard, memory or hard drive.

Q: I use Excel and as I put/get data in columns, the data will be left or right justified or centered. How do I correct this?

A: That is a formatting issue. And certain data types may align differently depending on your default settings in Excel. Your exact answer depends on the version of Excel you are using.

Q: I can not run this program e:\program files\apple computer\dvd@ccess\dvdaccess.exe Computer claims to not be able to find it.

A: I suspect there is an issue with that @ symbol in the directory name. Open a command prompt. Start --> Run -->cmd (command if using win98) --> ok Now enter the following:

```
e: <enter>
dir /x
```

The dir /x will give you the long and short names for the files. Program files should be progra~1 when you do a dir /x. Then

```
cd progra~1
dir /x
```

The apple computer name will be something like apple1~1 Again cd to that short name. Repeat again for dvd@ccess. Once in that directory do:

```
dir *.exe
```

You should see dvdaccess.exe. Type dveaccess at the command prompt (you don't need the .exe part but the first part needs to match what you get with the dir command). And your program should run.

If the name of the program has an @ in it, do:

```
dir /x *.exe
```

And then use the short name for that program to run it. If that still doesn't work, I suspect a bad CD or CD drive.

Q: Is Internet Explorer 7 safe to use now?

A; It should be, but it's possible that you may have programs that need to be updated to work with it. I cannot possibly tell from here<GRIN>! Some of HP's scanner and printer drivers did not get along with IE7, but they should be updated by now.

Q: On a new computer running WinXP, how do you set the internet browser to remember your email address by typing the first few characters?

A: In IE6 (I don't have access to IE7), tools, Internet Options, content. Click on AutoComplete and turn on the options you want there. I don't like to save passwords there for two reasons.

- 1) If someone else sits down at your computer and goes to your webmail page, they can get auto-logged into your email account.
- 2) You will forget your password.

If you forget your password and something happens and your password is wiped out or you try to use a different computer, you won't remember it to log into your email account.

Q: I have a laptop with wireless that I use regularly at two different locations. If the laptop has been turned off for a day or two and then I connect to one of the sites, it typically hangs busy trying to satisfy DNCP & updates. Any way to get around this slowness and sluggish response at startup?

A: Not really. Several programs on your computer demand attention when the computer has been turned off for a while. For instance, your AntiVirus program, antispam (if separate), Acrobat Reader and others.

When you turn on your computer, all these programs want to 'phone home' and can really slow down your computer until they have all talked to home and gotten their updates. My advice is to turn it on get logged on(if necessary) and go get a cup of coffee. It will be find in a few minutes, and there really isn't much you can do about it.

Q: How do I duplicate a non-copy protected CD home video clips)?

If you don't have a third party program installed, you can copy the files to your hard drive and the write back out with normal Windows commands on to a CDR. However, Nero and other CD writing software have special modes to copy CDs that make this task much easier.

Q: I have an HP desktop that has a window displayed on top of the desktop. This computer has never been connected to the Internet.

A: It's hard to tell from this description (the pic was not much help to me). But I suspect something wants to talk to HP to look for updates or register itself.

Q: How close to the ip address of my desktop system must I choose the ip address for the dedicated print I have?

A: Go to a command prompt and type ipconfig. My computer will show

Ethernet adapter local area Connection:

```
Connection-specific DNS Suffix . : lcrcomputer.com
IP Address. . . . . : 192.168.250.130
Subnet Mask . . . . . : 255.255.255.0
Default Gateway . . . . . : 192.168.250.254
```

The first three sets of numbers of the IP Address will determine the subnet (192.168.250). Most home routers will be 192.168.1.x or 192.168.254.x. Match those first three numbers. The fourth one usually starts at 100 or 50. Pick a number a bit lower, like .90 or .40. and then match the other two numbers on the printer. ***And write down the ip address or make a label to put on the printer with this info.***

Q: Has anyone had success with a wireless printer?

A: They work well as long as they are close enough to your wireless access point to get a good signal. If the printer gets a weak or marginal signal, you will have problems.

Q: How can XP be configured to use two display screen?

A: For the most part, it's easiest to use a video card that supports two monitors directly. Second choice is to get two good-quality video cards with lots of video ram on them that supports two cards in XP.

Once you get into add-on video cards, they will come with their own ram and not use shared ram. Usually only video cards built into the motherboard steal ram from Windows. Disable the built in card and use either two add-on cards or a card that supports two monitors.

You need to research video cards on the Internet to make sure you get cards to work will together.

Q: What is the best way to become competent in the use of Photoshop Elements?

A: What method of learning works best for you? What works for me may not work for you.

Get a beginners book on Photoshop Elements and work through their examples. Check out classes at the community college or other resources on the Internet for classes. You can sometimes find online classes also.

Q: My Bank changed their security system to access your account online. Now it asks several questions in addition to my user id and password and it won't stop. I talked to their customer support and they claim it's a cookie issue on my computer. I have deleted my cookies and the problem persists.

A: Good question! And I don't have an easy answer for this one. It's possible that your computer is not fully compatible with their system. More than likely antivirus/antimalware software on your computer is not saving the cookie correctly or completely that the online bank security is looking for. So it thinks you may not be who you claim and will ask additional security questions.

Q: I have one person who writes to me and when I hit reply, his email address is always wrong and I have to correct it.

A: This is a configuration problem on their end, not yours. In email, you can specify your reply to email address (and it doesn't have to be a working email address) in your email program. And when you hit reply, the system displays the email address as the sender specified it to be, right or wrong.

Q: I am considering of getting Comcast's Internet Services. I was planning on using their self-install kit. I have seen others state not to use their install CD but call tech support instead. What about my current anti-virus?

A: For advanced users, I recommend ghosting (complete backup) of your computer, run the installation CD and then restore your computer from that ghost backup of it. That way the install will be complete and you get rid of all the extra stuff the installation CD puts on your computer. I have not installed their service for a while, so can't comment further.

Reference your antivirus program. It can interfere with the installation. I would recommend disabling your AV with doing the installation.

One other caution! Never, Never install two AV programs on your computer. Even if your old program is expired, it's still there and hooked into Windows. You will learn the true meaning of slow. It will make the fastest computer on the market run like that 386SX you had 10 or 15 years ago...

Q: I sometimes can not access my Excel program. I will get a message 'Locked for editing'. Other times I will get a message that someone else is using the program.

A: It sounds like your antivirus program is not setup correctly or is misbehaving and is locking your files and prevents them from being opened by Excel.

Q: What DC voltages are used in a laptop?

A: Depends on the laptop. They are all different.

Q: Comments on Vista? Good bad or indifferent?

A: It's a good OS, but for some, it gets in your way asking permission to do things you can do easily in XP. It requires more computer resources than XP to work well, and many times laptop users are the most vocal with poor performance problems.

Q: What are mapped drives and what are they used for and how do you set them up?

A: Mapped drives are for accessing files on other computers in your local network. For instance, you have a desktop and a laptop at home. You can setup an area of your desktop's hard drive for sharing and map a drive letter on the laptop to the desktop to share files.

A lot of this can be beyond the scope of a simple Q&A answer and should be the topic of a short demo at a future club meeting.

Q: What is the source of multiple script errors which appear as popups when I am getting on-line (with IE5.0) and how can AI overcome them?

A: IE 5.0 is fairly old in computer terms. If possible, upgrade to IE 6. That alone may fix those errors. Beyond that it depends on what is causing the script errors. I can think of two sources of script errors. Java can cause script errors and updating to the latest java run time can fix them if that is the source of the script errors.

In addition there are windows scripts. This is something that can be updated or be just plain corrupt. Go to <http://download.microsoft.com> and search for a windows scripting host download. Even if you have such installed, re-installing can fix an install that gets corrupted.

Q: I don't have any productivity software with my new computer.

A: All Windows computers come with Wordpad, which is a fairly simple editor without a spell checker. But OpenOffice is a free download and includes much of the functionality you want and at a very good price.

Q: I have a laptop with WinXP connected via wireless to our Internet connection. Was working, walked away, computer went into sleep mode and the Internet went away.

A: Sleep mode does that from time to time. I setup all my computers to disable hibernation and sleep modes. Also you need to turn off power management on your network card (in this case the wireless network adaptor).

Go to the Control panel and put it in Classic mode. Double click on Network connections. Right click on your wireless connection and select Properties. Now, select Configure next to the box 'Connect using:'. Select the tab marked Power Management and de-select 'Allow the computer to turn off this device to save power.' and OK out.

Q: Comments on Internet Security Suites?

A: In my business, I have a lot of trouble with Symantec/Norton Internet Security suites. I like the combination of ZoneAlarm for a firewall and Grisoft's AVG w/malware for antivirus & anti-malware.

I have also found the anti spam email plugins of Norton and others to be more trouble than they are worth.

Q: What are some of the free email service providers?

A: Gmail from Google, Yahoo, HotMail are the big three.

Microsoft Office Drops Support For Older File Formats

By Scott Gilbertson January 02, 2008 | 9:44:23 AM Categories: [Office](#), [software](#), [Windows](#)

You might not have noticed it yet, but the recent service pack 3 release for Microsoft Office 2003 contains a hidden "feature" – it disables support for older Microsoft Office formats. If you've got any old Word, Excel, 1-2-3, Quattro, or Corel Draw documents hanging around your hard drive you'll need to delve into the Windows Registry to open them.

A note posted to the [Microsoft Support Center](#) says that “by default, these file formats are blocked because they are less secure,” and goes on to warn that “they may pose a risk to you.” Which files are blocked depends a bit on your environment since network administrators can add whatever file formats they want to the registry, but by default it appears most files in formats which existed prior to Office 97 won't open.

The particularly annoying part of the change is that there's no easy workaround. To get Office 2003 SP3 to open older files, you'll need to [hack the Windows registry](#).

While it's easy for the casual user to dismiss this sort of break in backwards compatibility since it's unlikely they have many key documents in older formats, there's some understandably upset folks who have to maintain legacy documents in large corporate and academic networks. As one commenter points out [in the Slashdot thread](#), the situation for large customers is quite complicated:

- > There is no easy way to identify the files that need conversion. Microsoft gives you no tool or flag to quickly identify old files, which share the same filename conventions as current files. Except of course to open them in Office 2K3SP3 and watch them fail.
- > Although bulk conversion tools exist, they cost money and they won't reach files that are secured in such a way that IT support staff can't get at them (e.g., on a CD-ROM in a locked filing cabinet).
- > Because a ridiculously complicated registry hack is required to enable the converters for the old documents, there's no easy way to apply it; for example, as an Active Directory group policy. We're left with error-prone methods like push tools & login scripts.

To add insult to injury, Microsoft's explanation for the changes doesn't wash – file formats are not insecure and cannot by themselves allow something like a buffer overflow exploit. The security vulnerability is in the program that opens the files and allows the exploits to execute. The issue then is not the older documents but that Microsoft has decided that, rather than address the insecure code in Office, it will simply disable support for the formats which could exploit those insecurities.

If you're affected by the changes and want to open your documents, have a look at the registry hack – according to Microsoft it's your only option.

Naturally, there's an alternative which is somewhat easier (and free): just grab a copy of OpenOffice, which can handle the older file formats. Once you've got them open, now might be a good time to convert them to ODF documents lest Office 2017 decide to again disable support for older file formats.

contributed by Lyle Giese

Good bye, Netscape!

It's been said that all good things must come to an end and that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone.

On December 28th, AOL announced that they will support Netscape Navigator until February 1, 2008 only, and is encouraging all Netscape users to embrace Firefox as their browser of choice.

A little history:

AOL purchased Netscape Communications Corporation in 1999 as part of its strategy to significantly advance its "multiple brand strategy, broaden its audience reach and take its electronic commerce business to a new level."

At the time of the acquisition, Netscape had begun working on converting the Netscape Communicator web suite into open source software, under the new name: Mozilla. AOL played a significant role in the launch of the Netscape 6 browser, the first Mozilla-based Netscape browser released in 2000. In 2003, an independent foundation was created to support the continued development of the open source web suite. AOL was a major source of support for the Mozilla Foundation and the company continued to develop versions of the Netscape browser based on the work of the foundation.

Harsh reality;

While internal groups within AOL have invested a great deal of time and energy attempting to revive Netscape Navigator, the efforts have not gained market share from Internet Explorer. The latest releases have been little more than creating a dressed-up version of Mozilla with a few additional extensions.

The money that was once invested in developing and supporting this venerable web browser has been reallocated to meet with AOL's current business plan which calls for transitioning to an ad-supported web business. Netscape's press release said that "we feel it's the right time to end development of Netscape branded browsers, hand the reins fully to Mozilla and encourage Netscape users to adopt Firefox.

What this means to Netscape users;

- Security patches will continue to be released for Netscape Navigator/Messenger until February 1, 2008. After that, there will be no active support for any version of Netscape.
- While it will be possible to still download older versions of Netscape, without security patches and support, they may leave your machine vulnerable.
- The Netscape site will continue to exist, but only as a general use web portal.

All is NOT LOST;

If you download Firefox (www.firefox.com) and don't like the look and feel, there are add-ons and extensions to ease the transition. You can download the Netscape Navigator v9 skin and several extensions at <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/user/56836>.

These links will be posted on the club website in the near future.

Contributed by Cindi Carrigan