

Chesapeake PC Users Group, Inc.

THE PRINTER



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Correction from October

Last month we took orders for software from Intuit and Symantec. Unfortunately we were only able to order two titles from the list presented. For those who ordered the Norton Anti-Virus suite of software, you will be due a refund. Hopefully the software that we did order will be in by the main meeting on November 12. As of last month, all of our copies of TechNet sold. If you didn't receive a subscription, but are interested, contact me and we will keep a list for future orders.

Get out and Vote!

As I am sure you are aware, the election will take place November 4. Be sure to get out there and vote! And if a friend needs help getting to a polling place, help them! It's very important that everyone exercise their right to vote.

November 12 meeting – TechNet for everyone

So you hear me refer to this TechNet thing - what the heck is it anyway? Basically with a TechNet subscription you gain access to evaluate most of Microsoft's professional software. This includes Operating Systems, Office Suites, Server Software, Databases, Development systems, etc. So you may be thinking to yourself, why should I care?

- o Even if you only use one of the Office suites,

you save a TON of money.

- o Many people have multiple computers. If you want to load Microsoft operating systems on each computer, this is the way to do it. You are granted 10 licenses of each operating system.
- o Advanced support is available to TechNet subscribers.
- o Try different operating systems and software. Feel free to experiment without the additional cost.

This is really one of the best deals that members have been offered in recent memory.

December 10 meeting – Party and Gaming!

As is a tradition for our December meetings, we let our collective hair down and look at the lighter side of computing and talk about games! Mike Regimenti will host the event this year. Feel free to bring family members so that they can see what you do on Wednesdays all year. Refreshments and snacks will be on hand.

Meetings are really starting to become interesting so I hope that you can attend as many as possible. Also I hope that you participate in the meetings as well.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!
Michael

Free Quicken Online - cont'd

- Send your balance and transactions alerts — i.e., if your checking goes below, credit card balance goes above, or if you post a large transaction

Community

Lastly, Quicken Online comes with a [support community](#) where you can chat with other users around the world. In addition, there's also a [blog](#) where you find the latest information, tips, and tricks.

Overall, it's not significantly different from [Mint.com](#) or [Wasabe](#). However, I actually prefers [Quicken Online](#) slightly more than the other two due to its speed and simplicity. **Have you tried [Quicken Online](#)? What do you think?**

I Like Linux - cont'd

loaded with Linux continued to run for as long as the comparison experiment was set to run.

7. Many distributions of Linux are as easy, or easier to install than Microsoft Windows.
8. A person can customize and/or build a Linux operating system to meet individual needs.
9. Many distributions of Linux include such primary applications such as the Firefox web browser, OpenOffice, an office suite similar to Microsoft Office (word processor, spreadsheet, presentations, etc.), and a number of other "name brand" applications.
10. Linux can be cost free. There are hundreds (or more) of applications written for Linux and there is a growing library of applications.

Microsoft Windows was the new kid on the block at the time I switched to Linux, but from my point of view, it did NOT do many ordinary things well.

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Google's New "Chrome Browser" (Beta) Not Yet Ready for Prime Time

by

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WEBSITE: <http://www.google.com/chrome>

As I type this, the national media is playing up the fact that today is Google's tenth anniversary. In that time it has become the predominate player in the search industry, with a market share of about two-thirds. By more than coincidence, Google also recently announced the public release of a beta version (pre-release) of its free new browser with the moniker "Chrome". It is no secret that Google is in a competitive war with some parts of the Microsoft dynasty, and Chrome is intended to be a competitor of Internet Explorer (IE). By design, Chrome may be a superior browser to IE, but in the few days that I have used it, I have to conclude that the current beta version is "...not yet ready for prime time." Several of the websites that I routinely visit, including two different webmail accounts, My Yahoo, my weather page, and some other sites would partly load and display, and then disappear with a black window with a white font and graphic displayed. The graphic is of a frowning web page, and the expression "Aw Snap! Something went wrong while displaying this webpage. To continue press Reload or go to another page." Reloading would not fix the problem on any page where the error appeared. This is why I believe that this beta version, while fast, attractive and feature rich, is not quite ready to take its place as a primary or secondary browser. For the record, every page that failed to load in Chrome, loaded flawlessly in IE and Firefox. Despite this nagging bug, Chrome is still a worthwhile free download, because it has several interesting features lacking on the competing browsers, especially its obvious target, Chrome's nemesis, Internet Explorer.

Chrome (beta) was fast and easy to download from www.google.com/chrome, and effortlessly installed on my XP machine. During the install I was given the option to import bookmarks (favorites), cookies, and passwords from Internet Explorer, which I chose to do. While unstated by Google, it appears obvious that later versions of Chrome will be able to import data from Firefox. Chrome will also run on Vista, and versions for Mac and Linux are in the works.

After reading about Chrome and its features, I was excited about its potential. It is written in open source code using some of the best features of other open source products such as Firefox and Apple's WebKit. The code is tight and compact, and when it works, appears to load and display websites much faster than IE. Some of the technical websites have actually tested the load times of popular websites, and Chrome may be the fastest browser available. One feature about Chrome, which I was especially interested in, was its default display of thumbnails of the websites most frequently visited by the user. Clicking on the thumbnail would instantly open the website either in that window, or in another tab (window) at the user's discretion. The appearance of the Chrome browser is clean and uncluttered. Each Chrome tab or window is loaded in a virtual "sandbox" such that if one web page crashes, it will not take down the entire browser, but instead only close the affected tab.

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Anti-Virus Virus

by

Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

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I hate writing about computer viruses. It always reminds me of how many unscrupulous, money-hungry people there are in the world. Yet, there are times when I feel that I must write about a certain virus because it is causing so much havoc for everyday computer users. Unfortunately, that time has come again. In the past two weeks, my company has removed a very bad group of viruses from six different computers. So I feel it is time to send out a warning.

There are many different variations of this virus and its cousins. They have many different names, including Antivirus 2008, Antivirus 2009, SpywareScanner 2008, and AntiVirXP08. Some experts are calling them viruses. Some are calling them malware. Symantec calls them misleading applications. McAfee lists them as a PUPs (potentially unwanted programs). Whatever you call them, they are terribly invasive.

By most accounts, these awful applications piggy-back on programs that are downloaded from the Internet. However, some experts are warning that your computer may become infected by simply visiting certain websites, especially if your operating system and/or antivirus software is not up-to-date.

The gist of the matter is that once your computer is infected, you will begin to see pop-up windows that give an exaggerated report of the number of threats that your computer is infected with. The window may say something like "Your computer has become infected with 231 computer viruses and spyware." These pop-ups try to scare you into purchasing their antivirus or antispyware software. If you purchase it, they send you a registry key, but it doesn't work because the program they sell you

doesn't exist. These viruses are also being spread by malicious websites that sell fake antispyware software.

On top of that, there are many other viruses or pieces of malware that can piggyback on the main virus. So this malware can dramatically slow down or even stop your computer. The infections being caused by these viruses and malware programs are extremely harmful and can be very difficult to remove. They often require a cleanup by a professional or a complete reformatting of the hard drive and reinstallation of the software.

As an everyday computer user, you need to be very careful about the software that you download from the Internet. Make sure that it is from a source that you know to be reputable or a website that has been recommended by a trustworthy source. You can also use a program like the McAfee Site Advisor to help you assess the validity of the website before you download the program. McAfee's Site Advisor is a small program that is used by your Internet browser to indicate the safety of websites. It is a free download available at www.siteadvisor.com and it is a valuable tool.

Also, as usual, be sure that you update your operating system and antivirus software regularly. Don't fall for any program that pops up on your computer trying to scare you into purchasing antivirus or antispyware software.

Yes, the bad guys are out there and they have a lot of computer savvy. So we all need to be smart about the software we download and the websites we visit.

Free Quicken Online Review

by

[Pinyo](#)

Moolanomy -- <http://www.moolanomy.com/>

Until recently, [Quicken Online](#) cost \$2.99 per month after a 60-day free trial period. Beginning October 13th, 2008 there is no longer a fee to use the [Quicken Online](#) program — yes, it's free! Since I like free stuff, I signed up yesterday to get some first hand experience. In short, I like it. It's similar to [Mint.com](#) (see [Mint.com review](#) here), but Quicken Online is simpler to use with a bit less functionality.

Set Up A Free Quicken Online Account

The set up was fast and easy. First, I went to the [Quicken Online](#) web site and selected "Start Now". The registration has less than 10 questions on just one screen — that's it. Enter all the information and you are in.

Similar to other software in its genre, you first have to add your financial accounts. This step is easy as well. Search for your financial institutions by name and enter your username and password for that account when prompted. You can add all of your accounts, or just a few to try it out.

Four Main Areas To Analyze Your Finances

Once your account is set up, there are four main areas to help you explore and better manage your finances.

Home — My Finances Dashboard

On the first **HOME** tab, you could quickly see the state of your finances — i.e., how much money came in, went out, and if you overspent or not. There's also a nice pie chart that breaks down your expenses into categories so that you can quickly examine the group for opportunity to reduce your expenses. Lastly, there's a neat time period slider you can use to quickly see your cash flow for different time period.

The only complication I ran into is the fact that one of my financial institutions uses a double entry accounting system, making it a little more difficult to categorize income and expenses. For example, if you look at the picture above carefully, I didn't overspend. The system treated some of my stock purchases as expenses against the savings account.

My Transactions

This tab provides full transactions listing so that it's easier for you to categorize transactions and review activities across your accounts.

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Free Quicken Online - cont'd

Track Spending

This is a neat tool that shows you top expenses by category. This is where you can [use the Pareto Principle to reduce expenses](#) without doing the manual tabulation work. Just click on the tab, and you can see where your money goes — voila! The second feature is the trending chart, which gives you an idea if you are doing better or worse with your expenses.



My chart looks worse than it actually is. If you look carefully, the biggest expense category is my recent stock purchases — that’s why the trend is way up in October.

My Budget

The last of the four major areas is a [budgeting](#) area where you can set budgets for various categories of expenses.

Mobile & Email Alerts

Similar to Mint.com, you can set alerts to be sent to your mobile phone or email. Quicken Online offers the following alerts:

- Send reports of your financial highlights
- Send your bill reminders

Password Protection

by

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When technology is good, it is very, very good, but when it is bad it can be truly atrocious. So it is with the hacking of Sarah Palin's Yahoo email account. The bad guys are out there using technology for their own advantage. Whether they are serious hackers who want information for devious purposes or young students who just want to show their technological prowess, this theft shows that everyone is vulnerable.

The recent hijacking of Sarah Palin's email account is also a great example of how a hacker can gain access to an email account and how email accounts need to be better protected against such penetration.

We currently rely on passwords to protect most of our online activity. Professional hackers often use "password crackers" to guess passwords. Anyone can easily find these hacker tools on the Internet. They can even be purchased on CD. There are wordlists for common passwords and dictionary combinations of possible passwords in a variety of different languages. These tools are all aimed at giving a person all the technical tools that they need to guess passwords.

In Sarah Palin's case, however, the perpetrator didn't even have to use tools like this. A hacker identifying himself as "Rubico" claims to have been able to change the password on Sarah Palin's Yahoo Mail account quite easily. All he had to do was use her email name to log into the Yahoo Mail's interface and select the option to reset the password. Yahoo then asked him to provide her birth date and zip code, which have become public knowledge. He then had to answer her self-chosen security question which

was where she met her husband. After several television interviews of Sarah and her husband, the answer to that question also became public knowledge.

Sarah Palin was thrown into the public arena quite quickly, but even those of us who are not public figures may find that their passwords and answers to security questions can be easily guessed. Do you use the name of your spouse, children, pet, favorite sport, birthday, or wedding date as your password? Have you entered security questions like place of birth or favorite color that are easy to guess?

Privacy as we knew it before the Internet is now a thing of the past. With the Internet, more of our lives are online than most of us realize. Many people use blogging as a past time and post information on MySpace, Facebook, and other social networking websites. Once posted, all of that information is publicly known. And the Internet is archived, so even when you remove current information, previously posted information can still be found in Internet archives. That information can be used to guess passwords and access personal information.

So here are a few ground rules that may help keep your private information a little safer online:

1. Use passwords that are not easy to guess and cannot be easily cracked. (Look for more on how to choose good passwords in next week's column.)
2. Choose a security question that others will not be able to guess the answer to. Or answer the security question with an answer that you create which is not necessarily the true answer.

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Let Me Count the Ways I Like Linux

by

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I used to use Microsoft Windows up to Windows 98. I then switched to Windows NT in a dual boot system with Linux. However, when I went to boot NT one more time and NT gave me a message to the effect "I'm sick, fix me," I said goodbye to Windows and Linux has been my main operating system since. I found Linux applications to match all my user data. I was able to move all that data from the NT file system (NTFS) to the earlier Windows file system (FAT). From there I copied all the data into the ext2 file system, which was used by Linux at the time.

Now let me count the ways I like Linux:

1. Linux resembled the HP-UX operating system (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HP-UX>) I was using at work. This made going between work and home easier.
2. The roots of the Linux operating system go back to the late 1980's. By the time I decided to switch to Linux, it was a viable (if little known) multi-user, multi-tasking operating system for Personal Computers. That meant I could establish more than one user for my PC and run multiple programs simultaneously - I was not restricted to either the Windows or MAC operating systems for those PC capabilities. And, of course, Linux was (and still is) free.
3. Linux comes with a distribution of the X windows protocol produced by an international consortium. To understand this capability, think of it as "...providing the basic framework for building Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs), and moving windows on the screen and interacting with a mouse and/or keyboard." (extracted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X_windows).

[org/wiki/X_windows](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X_windows)). Because this capability was (and is) not built into the operating system, it provides greatly enhanced flexibility for anyone creating Linux applications.

4. For those familiar with the Windows and MAC operating systems, it is surprising to realize that the software that creates what you see as the "desktop" can actually be a separate application program. I use the GNOME desktop together with X windows. This desktop (one of several that can be used with Linux) allows me to use a number of different screens and switch between them as I wish. This allows me to open an application on one screen and switch to a different screen to open another application. From <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNOME>: "The GNOME project puts heavy emphasis on simplicity, usability, and making things 'just work....'"
5. There are a wide range of user applications available, as well as tools to write your own applications.
6. Linux has (and has had for some time) a reputation for stability. The operating system doesn't crash unless the user does something to make it crash. Around 1997 (about the time I decided to change to the Linux operating system) I read an article (in a Linux magazine) professing to use two computers as near identical as production processes allow. They loaded one computer with Microsoft Windows and the loaded the second computer with Linux. They ran similar benchmark programs on both computers. The machine loaded with Microsoft operating system crashed in a short time. The machine

Almost everyone needs a little help with Word 2007

by

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Bear with me while I quote John Dvorak from his August 2008 PC Magazine column, then I will tell you what my point is.

Regarding Vista, he said: "Vista isn't completely unusable; It's simply hard to use. Menus have been reorganized for no apparent reason, features of XP appear to be missing or need to be turned on from some remote directory, and basic functions are now obfuscated.

"In a nutshell, Vista manages to be more complicated than XP, performs more poorly than XP, and is more expensive than XP."

Now, substitute Word 2007 for Vista and Word 2003 for XP and my point is made. Compared with Word 2003, Word 2007 is an involuntary learning experience for anyone already proficient in Word and productive with one or more of the features. To name a couple I use often, are: Mail Merge, tables, labels, and fields. But, first users have to discover where basics like Help, Save As, Print and Close are.

To say Word 2007 has a steep learning curve may not scare everyone. But, to say it has a steep learning curve for experienced Word users should scare everyone, as well as be a cause for serious concern.

Unfortunately, I didn't fully understand how an Office 2007 upgrade for Office 2003 functioned. If you haven't taken the step, yet, let me caution you. The upgrade wipes out Office 2003 and you cannot downgrade. I believe this step was automatically

taken by the installation. Perhaps with a full version, you would be given a choice to install the newer version into another directory, leaving the older version intact.

The first thing you notice when you open Word 2007 is the highly touted "ribbon." Nine tabs take the place of menu items across the top of the window. The tabs do not have the same names as the old menu items. In fact, a couple of the tab categories—Home, References and Add-Ins—are enigmatic. And as they say on "Dancing With The Stars," the tabs "are in no particular order."

Clicking on a tab opens a segmented toolbar of options across the top of the window that relate to that tab's category. Although you may want to add to or rearrange the commands on the Ribbon or change or remove a command or group on the Ribbon - as you might have done with the menu and toolbar of earlier Word versions - you cannot.

And, you can forget about being able to revert to Word's old style toolbars and menus. But, Microsoft helpfully advises that if you are fluent in XML programming code, you can add tabs to the Ribbon.

In Photoshop, the ribbon concept is intuitive and natural, and actually speeds up productivity. In Word, it can be chaotic and time-wasting.

Now, that you have this background in mind, you will better understand the images and steps that follow which is a short tutorial for simplifying Word 2007. My suggestion for anyone using the new Word

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Password Protection - cont'd

3. Use unique passwords, especially for important services and websites like banking sites and email.
4. Keep your passwords private. Don't leave them on a sticky note on your computer screen or keep them in an unencrypted file on your computer.
5. Change your passwords often.
6. Do not change your password by clicking on a link in an email from someone claiming to be a system administrator, bank representative, or other seemingly reputable party. They may not be who they say they are. When you want to change your password, always type in the address yourself so you know you are at the real website rather than a bogus one.
7. Use one credit card for all online purchases. This will limit your financial exposure.
8. Keep your operating system up-to-date.
9. Use a good anti-virus and anti-spyware programs.
10. Consider using an encrypted password manager program.

Check the Compu-KISS website at www.compukiss.com for more information on choosing good passwords.



Word 2007 - cont'd

version is to first set it up to make the features you need easy to locate.

With that in mind, I'll show you how to create a custom toolbar for the tasks that you need to perform most often. It will help to take the aggravation and time-wasting practice of hunting around and calling on Help to figure out where things are and how to use them.

Incidentally, speaking of Help, here's a tip. When you need to turn to Help, don't look for a tab or menu item. Just as in the old days of DOS, you must press the F1 key to make it appear!

In the upper left corner of the Word window is a round Windows logo, called the Microsoft Office Button. It will remind you of the Start button in Windows. Click on this button, it is a kind of command center temporarily until you get Word customized the way you want it. Or, it's possible, you may prefer to use it, rather than the Quick Access Toolbar. (Nah.)

The Quick Access Toolbar is just to the right of the Microsoft Office Button. It can be likened to the Quick Launch Toolbar in Windows. (Do you see a pattern here?)

When you first open Word, the Quick Access Toolbar is empty. Click on the down arrow a slight distance away from the Microsoft Office Button. A dropdown list appears, similar to the ones you saw at the end of toolbars in Word 2003. It contains many of the general commands that you might use frequently.

Click on the commands that you want to be on the Quick Launch, er... Quick Access Toolbar. The icons will be added to the bar and available to you with one click.

It's almost too easy isn't it? Well, keep in mind that with this Word version, whatever effort you save in one area, you are going to earn by working harder somewhere else.

To Be Continued Next Month

Google's New "Chrome Browser" - cont'd

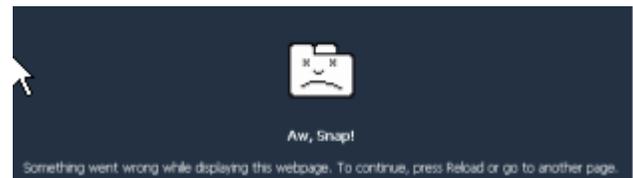
More and more applications are being integrated, many of which can be run directly from Chrome. Clicking on the control icon on the toolbar of Chrome gives several options, one of which is to create instant application shortcuts which can load applications into Chrome. An icon is created and placed on the desktop by Chrome, and clicking on that icon directly opens the application in a Chrome tab, even if Chrome is not loaded or is offline. This can give near instant access to such services as Gmail, Google Calendar, or most other applications.

Utilizing a concept "one box for everything" enables the traditional address bar of the browser to perform several simultaneous functions. As information is typed in the address bar, Google (by default) will identify previous websites visited as well as suggested search topics which become more detailed as more is typed. While Google is the factory default search setting, it can be easily changed to other major search engines, such as Yahoo. Multiple sites, such as EBay, Amazon, and others can also be selectively searched as determined by the user.

Chrome uses tabbed browsing long a staple of Firefox, but fairly new in IE. The tabs are dynamic, in that they can be dragged changing their order on the top of the screen, or into a window creating a new window. This gives the user total control over the appearance of the pages displayed for comparison or other purposes, and is an attractive feature. Another useful feature in Chrome that also previously appeared as a default in Firefox is a safe browsing function. Chrome dynamically checks websites entered in the address bar against a continuously updated database of malware and phishing (identity theft) websites, and displays the following in a red warning window in a large font, "WARNING: Visiting this site may harm your computer!".

Many users like to create lists of bookmarks and favorites, and Chrome makes book marking sites very fast and easy. There is a small star on the address bar, and clicking on the star creates the bookmark, with the option to modify the bookmark. Another common task that Chrome handles very well is downloading files. Rather than using a download manager, Chrome displays download progress in the bottom of the window. When completed, the downloaded file can be dragged to the desktop or elsewhere, or opened directly by clicking on the filename in Chrome.

Chrome has been a lot of fun to play with, despite my frustrations trying to open some web sites. Google will be releasing frequent updates, and hopefully the page loading bug will be quickly remedied. If you want to try the latest in browser technology, being fully cognizant that it is currently a beta version, then Chrome may be a worthy browser to download and install. Chrome coexists just fine with IE and Firefox, and does not interfere with them.



The Next Regular Meeting will be at
The Severn River Middle School

Wednesday
November 12th, 2008

Meeting will be held in the large meeting room.
It starts at 7:00 P.M. with club business
and a short discussion period.

Mike Young's
presentation on
Microsoft TechNet

Members and their friends are welcome to
come, ask questions and become enlightened.

How to Find: Severn River Middle School

SRMS is close to the Arnold, MD campus of the Anne Arundel Community College. From Annapolis and parts south, take Rte 2 (Ritchie Highway) north about 3 miles from the intersection of Rt. 50, **turn right on College Parkway**. At the first light, turn left on Peninsula Farm Road. (Of course, if you are coming from points North, you would turn left on to College Parkway) about a half-mile down the road the large SRMS school building, set back off a large two level parking lot, will be visible on your right. Park here and go to the main entrance. Signs will be posted to direct you to the **Large Group Room** where we will be meeting.

How to find: The Technology SIG, A ChPCUG Special Interest Group**

The meetings are held at the SRMS in the Library.



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FIRST CLASS

INSIDE THIS VERY ISSUE!

President's Corner
Google Chrome
I Like Linux
Office 2007 Tips
Password Protection
... and a little bit more!

Note: The date above your name on the mailing label is the expiration date of your membership. Contact the Membership Chairman (page 2, column 2) to update.

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