

My glitch saga continues.

As Treasurer for a retiree organization I like to have the computer do my math. It isn't supposed to make a mistake – it's too dumb. A programmer can write code that can make it believe that 2 + 2 equals something other than 4, but just using its internal calculator should work fine.

My organization has multiple dues streams and we have to remit a per cap to our international organization. I made a three month Excel spreadsheet to do the calculations. It takes a while to set up the first one, copy and past the formulas for each stream and check to see that they are working correctly. For the 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarters I just copied the entire spread sheet and then changed the title and names of the months. Mission accomplished. Now all I had to do was enter the amounts I received each month, print the report at the end of the quarter, and send it in with a check.

I do a slightly different report for the end of the

year. Imagine my surprise when the combined report was 2 cents more than the total of my 4 quarterly reports. I checked my math several times because computers don't make mistakes, so I must have. I didn't, so I must have entered something wrong on my quarterly reports. I didn't, but somehow that 4th quarterly report had a 2 cent error in the per cap calculation for the dues our sub-chapter remitted.

I need to rethink my position on computer errors. The only things I changed in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarter reports were the names of the months and quarter involved. I left the formulas alone. They worked perfectly for the first 3 quarters. Why did the 4th quarter report come up 2 cents short? It can't even be a rounding error because that section is only one line with one calculation. Maybe a computer can make a mistake.

I meant to use the tax articles last month, but couldn't find where I had saved them. —Beth

Top 5 Tax Software

By William Perez, About.com

<http://taxes.about.com/od/taxsoftware/tp/taxsoftware.htm>

I have thoroughly tested dozens of tax software programs over the years, and this year finding the best tax software is a daunting challenge. I have put each software program through three tax scenarios, including making sure the software is up-to-date on the latest changes in the alternative minimum tax.

1. TaxACT Deluxe

TaxACT is highly recommended for people with relatively straightforward tax returns to prepare. TaxACT's appealing price and premium features makes it a top choice for many. The feature I like best is that TaxACT uses your tax return information to prepare a college financial aid worksheet. This will help parents and students in filling out their FAFSA applications. No



other tax software offers FAFSA worksheets.

2. TaxCut Premium

Quick and easy tax preparation in an updated interface, TaxCut is ideal for simple tax returns. H&R Block, the makers of TaxCut, have done a good job of making data entry screens easy to read. H&R Block offers "Worry-Free Audit Support," where an tax professional will help defend your return against an IRS audit, included in the price of the software.



3. TurboTax

TurboTax is very quick and easy for simple tax returns. I found it harder to find less-common



data entry screens, but TurboTax's live community provides easy access to relevant help and support if you have questions about taxes or using the software.

4. CCH CompleteTax



CCH CompleteTax offers a simple user interface, allowing you to enter data and answer interview questions in a no-frills environment. CompleteTax however expects you to be firmly in the driver seat. CompleteTax is the fastest of all the software programs for a complex tax return. The clean, simple user interview format makes maximum use of the computer screen,

so you don't waste time answering just one question at a time.

5. Free Tax Software



You can prepare your taxes and electronically file your return for free using one of the IRS Free File websites. The IRS has teamed up with nineteen software companies to make tax preparation free or low-cost for most Americans. You must begin at the IRS Free File page. If you go directly to the company's website, you won't qualify for the free service. Some of the participating software vendors are top-notch.



<http://www.irs.gov/efile>

Tax Preparation Software Reviews

By William Perez, About.com

TaxACT Software Review

Recommended for premium features and value pricing

What's Different about TaxACT

TaxACT has both an interview-mode (called "Q&A" on the navigation toolbar) and a forms-mode for data entry. Switching to the forms can speed up the data entry for taxpayers who feel comfortable working directly with the tax forms. Unlike other software programs, TaxACT's interface has remained consistent from year to year. Personally, I think helps users to navigate through the software quickly and easily. The desktop software is compatible with older versions of Windows.

TaxACT, like other tax software, enables you to input all your financial information and calculate your taxes.



Also similar is TaxACT's interview format and tabbed navigation bar, providing quick access to areas you want to work on. The top tax software companies are offering extra help with tax questions. 2nd Story Software is providing tax help by phone at no additional charge to users of the Deluxe or Ultimate versions of the software. By contrast, TurboTax is using a live community to answer tax and software questions. Users of TaxCut Premium get one session with an H&R Block advisor by phone.

In the deluxe and ultimate versions, TaxACT uses your tax return information to prepare a college financial aid worksheet. This will help parents

and students in filling out their FAFSA applications. No other tax software offers assistance with the FAFSA, so this is a real bonus.

Drawbacks to TaxACT

TaxACT handles the recovery rebate credit very nicely. The interview screen asks for the amount of the economic stimulus rebate received, and then provides a link to the IRS Web site where you can verify how much your stimulus payment was for.

TaxACT seems to be a little slow when it comes to data entry. For example, the data entry for the W-2 form is spread out over seven screens. By comparison, TaxCut has one input screen for the W-2 data, which to me seems easier because I can tab through the fields and enter the information quickly.

I have been accustomed to entering numerical data, such as dates, without any formatting. TaxACT will automatically round cents into dollars and will add hyphens to Social Security Numbers, but requires users to enter slashes in date fields. This may sound overly picky, but a tweak here could save some time.

While the interface is not as slick as TurboTax or TaxCut, I was able to find where to enter tax data more easily using TaxACT's navigation bar.

Comparison of TurboTax Premier and TaxACT Deluxe

The following is a comparison of TurboTax Pre-

mier and TaxACT Deluxe.

TaxACT was a tad faster but not as thorough as TurboTax. Both TaxACT and TurboTax caught a data entry error on my W-2 (a common mistake), and prompted me to verify my data. TaxACT's depreciation interview is a little cumbersome, while TurboTax handles business assets and depreciation with relative ease. TaxACT Deluxe does not have a 401(k) Maximizer, but TurboTax lacks the FAFSA worksheets.

TaxACT Product Versions

The standard version of TaxACT contains the federal tax modules. The Deluxe version adds context-sensitive tax tips from JK Lasser, advice for life changes, free technical support by phone, and FAFSA worksheets. The Ultimate version is the same as the Deluxe version, but adds one state tax module.

Desktop software:

- **TaxACT Standard** (free for federal tax return, extra \$13.95 for each state tax return)
- **TaxACT Deluxe** (\$12.95 for federal tax return, extra \$13.95 for each state tax return)
- **TaxACT Ultimate Bundle** (\$19.95 for federal and one state tax return)

The desktop software is compatible with Windows 98, Me, 2000, XP, and Vista.

Online software:

- **TaxACT Standard** (free for federal tax return, extra \$13.95 for each state tax return)
- **TaxACT Deluxe** (\$9.95 for federal tax return, extra \$13.95 for each state tax return)
- **TaxACT Ultimate Bundle** (\$16.95 for federal and one state tax return)

The online software is compatible with Internet Explorer 5.5+, Firefox 1.5+, Netscape 7.0+, Opera 9.0+, AOL 8.0+, and Safari 2.0.2+.

TaxCut Premium Review

TaxCut offers easy data entry and includes audit support

Quick and easy tax preparation in an updated interface, TaxCut is ideal for simple tax returns. H&R Block, the makers of TaxCut, have done a good job of making data entry screens easy to read. H&R Block offers "Worry-Free Audit Sup-

port" included in the price of the software. This means an H&R Block employee will help you defend your return against an IRS audit.

TaxCut is best for wage-earners and the self-employed

I was very surprised by the amount of time it took me to prepare a tax return using TaxCut Premium. In just 30 minutes, I prepared a fairly complex tax return, from start to finish. TaxCut's clean interface and short interview questions all helped speed things along. TaxCut also imports data from personal finance software, such as Quicken and Microsoft Money. Self-employed taxpayers will appreciate TaxCut's business assets and depreciation interview, which nicely handles deductions for business equipment.

TaxCut removed their SEP-IRA planning calculator from this year's version of the software. TaxCut also removed their interactive calculators for estimated taxes, SEP-IRAs and other retirement savings.

Help Questions on Each Page

H&R Block has made tax and program help easier to access. On the right hand side of TaxCut are frequently asked questions relevant to the data entry screen you are on. On the W-2 input page, for example, TaxCut display help for handling incorrect W-2 forms and tips for reporting stock options. Unlike TurboTax, which uses a community model to answer questions, the answers in TaxCut are written by the H&R Block staff.

TaxCut product versions

All versions of H&R Block's TaxCut software is the premium version. Differences are in how the software is bundled (with or without a state return or efile). Block also offers a Home & Business edition that includes TaxCut Premium plus software to prepare a business tax return and payroll returns. Thus TaxCut Home & Business is vastly more comprehensive of a software bundle than the similarly named TurboTax Home & Business which covers only sole proprietors.

For their online software, TaxCut comes in Basic and Premium offerings.



My PayPal Account's Been Hacked

By Steve Bass, a former Contributing Editor with PC World, a 23 year veteran of PIBMUG, and a founding member of APCUG.
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The e-mail from PayPal said I'd sent \$400 to a gaming firm in Germany. It's a dopey phishing expedition, I thought, and authentic-looking, for sure, but nothing to worry about.

The trouble was that when I logged on to PayPal, I really did have a \$400 withdrawal. It was clear that someone had my password.

Quick Password Tips

Here are the three essential things you need to know about password security:

- Use a password generator, a program that will create a long, complicated password.
- Don't ever use dictionary words, even if you stick in symbols, like bill\$gate\$. They're very easy to break using simple hacker programs. (LOL -- Thanks, Rod.)
- Use a different password for every important site. Using the same password on every site, especially critical ones, such as banking, is risky. Imagine using your one password on an unsavory, and possibly unscrupulous site. With that golden password, and a few guesses on your login name -- stevebass, steve_bass, sbass -- and they're in like Flynn.

Who's Got My Password?

I contacted PayPal (888/221-1161), supplied the details, and they opened up a case. My account is frozen and I don't doubt PayPal will credit me for the loss. (As I started editing this newsletter, PayPal reversed the charges.) PayPal is investigating, but I don't think they'll ever find out how someone got into my account, though it was clear the person had my password. The rep said I probably fell for a well-crafted e-mail spoof.

That's a blow to my ego. I see myself as suspicious -- verging on paranoid -- when it comes to phishing e-mails. What better prize than bragging rights to hacking a PC World guy, right? So I'm as vigilant as my dog is when I try to get her to take a pill wrapped in peanut butter. (Hey, you can't fool

me, pal, she probably thinks...)

If an e-mail -- suspicious or not -- refers to any of my important accounts and provides a link to click, I ignore the offer. It's safer to manually type the URL into my browser's address field. And yes, I'll cover phishing hassles -- and ways to guard against it -- in a future newsletter.

Password: z24x680uBS4!44

I'm also careful with my passwords and, at least until now, thought they were super stealthy. For example, on PayPal I used four numbers, a symbol, and three letters. According to Microsoft's Password Checker, my standard password pattern -- 1600%wtf -- is strong. But it could be better.

Microsoft says that the most effective passwords are 14 characters and have a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers, and a symbol or two. For example, z24x680uBS4!44 is strong enough for them to call it "best."

Test your passwords on Microsoft's site and see how well they stand up. Then browse Microsoft's excellent Strong passwords: How to create and use them. I promise you'll learn something. <http://tinyurl.com/2e7tmw>



Use Microsoft's Password checker to test your password's strength. You might be surprised. <http://tinyurl.com/ypc3dc>

Generating Strong Passwords

Creating a strong password is easy, provided you don't try to think one up on your own. There are dozens of Web sites that'll create passwords, but I don't use any of them. The last thing I'll do is trust someone online watching me create new passwords. Instead, download Password Generator, a freebie, and crank out all sorts of 14-character passwords. <http://tinyurl.com/4j8e8>



Keeping Track of Your Passwords

I just looked and counted roughly 220 sites I use that require a password.

Some site passwords, however, are immaterial. For instance, I use a simple-to-remember word for spots I rarely visit, places such as newspapers that force you to register and log in just to read articles, or tech sites with forum messages.

However, ever since the PayPal fiasco, I've changed every significant password on my system to a 14-digit gorilla.

Remembering all those passwords is a PITA, so you ought to consider using a password management tool. There are lots available. Many people like KeePass, a freebie; others swear by LargeSoft's \$30 Password Manager. I anticipate easily 100 e-mails -- no make that 200 -- kvetching that I haven't mentioned your favorite. But as far as I'm concerned, RoboForm is the best one around, and I've used it since it was first introduced.

RoboForm, The Master at Passwords

RoboForm is a \$30 program with more features for password management, privacy, and password

identification than any other program I know. You provide RoboForm with all the vitals you might need to complete a site's form--name, address, phone numbers, and even credit card numbers. When you click the Fill Forms button, the program does just that. I've created multiple identities, each with different info. For instance, I have one with MasterCard info, another with VISA accounts. I



Enter data into RoboForm's Identity card and fill in online forms.

Click a Web site from the RoboForm Passcard screen, and RoboForm transports your Web browser to the site, logging you in if necessary. Need an industrial-strength password? RoboForm will generate one for you. And don't worry about security: RoboForm is itself password-protected. The program will also safely send an encrypted password through e-mail to another RoboForm user. (I was recently discussing with my wife the fact that neither of us can function without it.)



BTW, RoboForm foils keyloggers (programs that watch keystrokes) because instead of typing, RoboForm inserts characters into form fields.

Here's a summary of RoboForm's features (<http://>

www.roboform.com/features.html), a comprehensive FAQ (<http://www.roboform.com/faq.html>) with answers to your most technical RoboForm questions and a way to compare the free and Pro versions (<http://www.roboform.com/why-pro.html>).

If you need portability, RoboForm2Go gives you the same protection when you carry your passwords on a flash drive and use it outside the office. Both the RoboForm program and your password files reside on a USB key, so you can take them from one computer to another. The tool costs \$40, but if you buy it at the same time you get RoboForm, the price drops to \$20. If you dig around, you'll occasionally find discounts. (Google RoboForm discount.)

Siber Systems offers a 30-day trial of both products. They work in all versions of Windows and support IE and Firefox, but not Google Chrome, Opera, or a few other browsers. Take a look at the

compatibility list. <http://www.roboform.com/browsers.html>

There's lots more to say about password management, but I'm almost out of space. So while you're hot on the topic, read Bitmill's smart series of Password Security 101 articles. They're less basic than you might imagine. <http://www.thebitmill.com/articles/>

Steve Bass is also the author of PC Annoyances: How to Fix the Most Annoying Things about Your Personal Computer, O'Reilly Press. It's available on Amazon at dirt cheap prices. <http://snipurl.com/annoy2>

This column originally appeared in Bass's TechBite newsletter. Subscribe to Bass's free weekly newsletter and read Bass's blog at www.snurl.com/techbiteblog. Contents copyright 2009, TechBite, LLC.

The Kindle2 May Make Newspapers Obsolete

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Every now and then a revolutionary new product comes along at a time when it is most needed. So it is with the just released Kindle2 wireless reading device, fondly called an e-book reader.

Up to now, electronic book readers have been very slow in taking off. Sony has had a book reading device for several years. Last year Amazon came out with the first version of the Kindle, which was impressive and fairly popular, but had a few drawbacks.

Now, however, the time for these devices may have finally come. At 8" x 5.3" the Kindle2 is about the size of a paperback. At about 1/3" thick, it thin but strong. In this second iteration, Amazon has corrected the design flaws of the original Kindle. It is now easy to use. The e-ink technology allows you to read the words on the Kindle just as you would read a book, with no eye strain or glare. You can adjust the size of the text to your liking. To turn the page you simply press a button. The reader even lets you read several books at once, always returning you to just where you left off. You can look up any word with the built-in dictionary.

You can underline words and add your own notes to the pages. This Kindle will even read the text of most books to you. So if you are engrossed in a book on the Kindle and need to pick up the kids, you can take the Kindle along and have it read to you in the car.

The best part of the Kindle, however, is the reading material and how it is delivered. The Kindle2 can hold more than 1,500 books. You can choose from over 240,000 books in the Kindle's Amazon store. Most of the books are priced at \$9.99. You can also subscribe to newspapers and magazines on the Kindle. The books, newspapers, and magazines are downloaded directly to the device over a free cellular network. I drove down a rural highway in North Carolina and downloaded a book and was reading it in less than five minutes. Better yet would be sitting on a beach and downloading a romance novel. In any case, the Kindle is ultimately useable. The biggest drawback for the Kindle right now is the price. At \$359, the Kindle is pretty expensive.

But if you are you ready to watch the ebook market explode, stick around for awhile. The Kindle2 has appeared on the horizon just as the economy is slumping. There are many hard-hit business sectors, but the newspaper and maga-

zine industry is already showing signs of cracking. CNN reports that many major newspapers are struggling including the San Francisco Chronicle, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, and the Miami Herald. Certainly online versions of newspapers and magazines are an alternative, but up to this point very few newspapers or magazines have been able to support themselves with online subscriptions and/or advertising.

As the print industry is looking for ways to cut costs, ebook readers may be an answer. If there were no print costs, perhaps large newspapers would be able to provide e-book readers to subscribers as part of the subscription costs or at least at a highly reduced rate. If the electronic device were done well enough, it could mimic the printed version and be filled with ads just like the

print newspapers and magazines. Normally I would expect that this type of transition would take a few years, but the economic woes may put a rush on this type of move. The Hearst Corp., one of the largest publishers, is already planning to launch its own wireless e-book reader. Most are speculating that this would be a device with a larger screen that would more closely imitate the newspaper and magazine reading experience. Hearst, who is a mega-publisher, would be in a great position to create the liaisons needed to make this type of device and its content work. Fortune reports that the Hearst device will be available sometime this year.

There is no doubt that we live in a world that is changing because of technology and this type of technology may be in your hands sooner than you think.

Password Protect Folders in XP

By David, WorldStart Staff Member

This information has been reprinted with permission from WorldStart

Do you share a computer with other users and want some extra security on your folders? There are two ways to password protect a folder built into Windows XP (for other Windows flavors, there are some freeware/shareware programs out there).

#1: If you have a log in password for your account, this can be used to protect folders from other users. Your hard drive must be formatted using NTFS (which it probably is unless you're dual booting with another operating system). Here's what to do...

Right-click the folder that you want to make private and choose "Properties" (or Alt+Double-click). Go to the "Sharing" tab and check the "Make this folder private" box.



Click Apply . If you do not have a password on your account, a box will pop up asking if you want

to assign a password. This must be done if you want to make the folder private, so click Yes . You will need to use your password to log on to your computer from then on.

Type in a password then confirm it. Click the "Create Password" button then close the Password window.

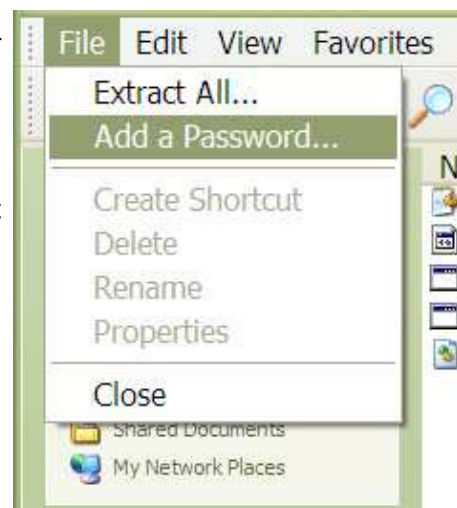
Click OK in the Properties dialog box.

Now anyone else logged on to your computer can't access that file without knowing your password.

#2: If the Folder is Zipped you can give it a unique password.

Just double-click the zipped folder.

In the top menu select File then click "Add a Password".



Type a password into the Password box. Then again in the "Confirm Password" box.



Now, you are the only person who can access files in this folder. The folder can be opened allowing the files to be seen, but you are the only one who can access them.

Don't you feel more secure now?

Smart Computing Tip Of The Day

Consider A Cordless Mouse

Although laptops are well-suited for working on the go, the pointing stick (that little nub in the middle of the keyboard that lets you navigate the pointer) and/or touchpad that replace your desktop's mouse can be hard to manipulate. If you prefer a mouse, check out a cordless one such as Logitech's VX Nano Cordless Laser Mouse for Notebooks (\$69.99; www.logitech.com). The sleek design makes it easy to transport, and the USB receiver is small enough to leave plugged in, so your mouse is ready when you are.

Computers 101 —

By Erin, WorldStart Staff Member

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Q: You're always talking about having a second hard drive on hand and I was thinking about getting an external one, but I'm not sure what to look for. Can you give me some hints? Thank you!

A: Oh, what a great question! After receiving it, I immediately went and did a search in our archives, because I thought for sure we had done a tip on this before. But, much to my surprise, there was nothing to be found. I couldn't believe we hadn't covered this topic before. I mean, it's definitely one a lot of you could get some good use out of. So, that's exactly why I'm going to take care of this one today. Let's get right down to it! First of all, you might be wondering why it's a good idea to buy an external hard drive. Well, the main purpose for one is to act as a backup option for your computer. If something were to go wrong with your regular hard drive, you could easily switch over to this one, without losing anything. It also adds a lot of portability to your data. With an external hard drive, you can take your data any-

where you need to go. They're very simple to use and they always seem to come in handy! With all of that said, here are five tips you can use when buying an external hard drive:

- 1.) **Go With a Brand Name** - When it comes to external hard drives, it's best to buy a brand name. Yes, it may cost you a little more, but it will save you in the long run. If you go with a name you don't recognize, you're really only going to get what you pay for. (Yes, the saying is true!) A hard drive made by a "not so well known" company may end up breaking down faster than another brand would and so on. Another good reason to buy a brand name is the warranty that comes with it. If something does go wrong with your drive, you can always have it fixed right away. On the other hand, with other companies, you might have a little trouble contacting them and actually getting your hard drive repaired. So, if you don't want to deal with all of that hassle, go with a brand name. You'll thank me later!

Dropbox

By Ed Richard, Leader of the Open Source SIG,

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So just exactly what is Dropbox, you might ask? Have you ever needed to

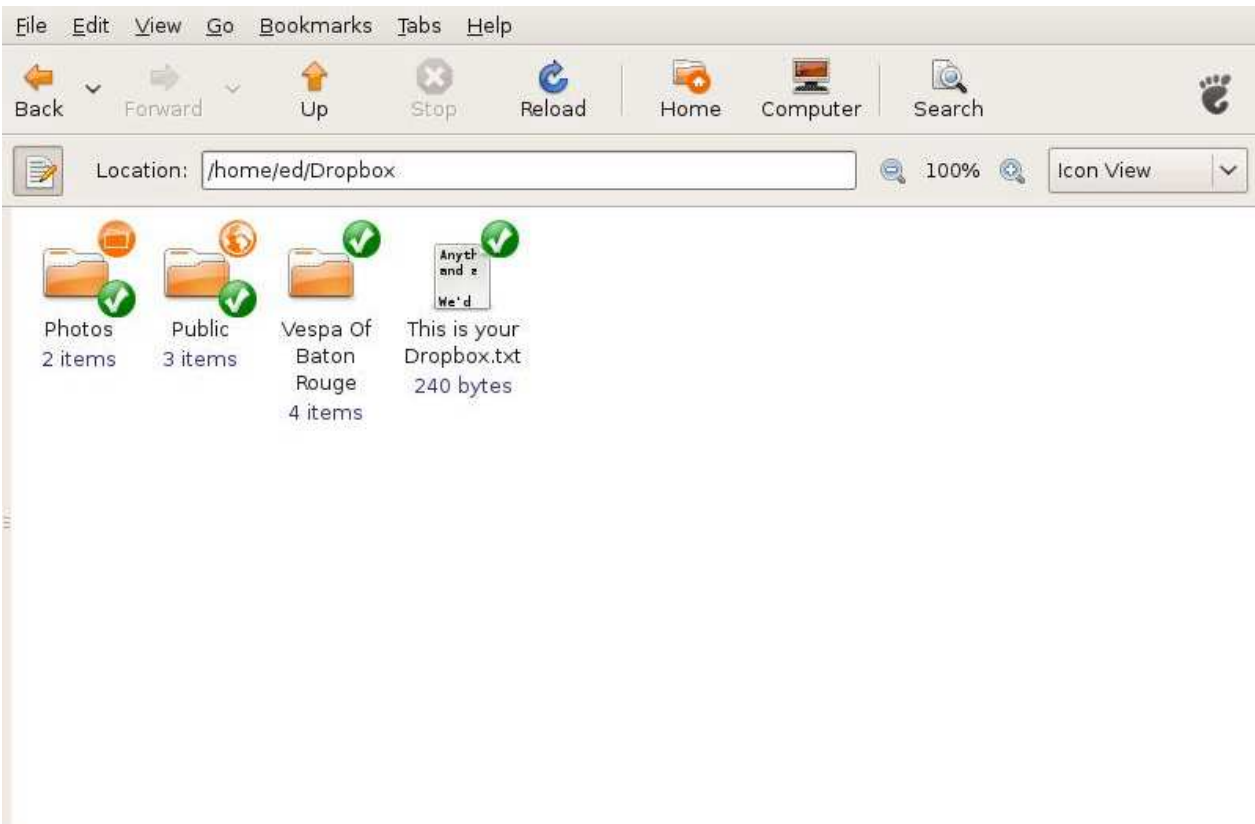
An awesomely simple and elegant online storage solution and so much more!

sync files between two or more machines? Have you wanted to also have an off-site copy of those files? Have you needed to sync files between Windows, Linux and Macintosh machines?

Have you wanted to

have a public photo album to share pictures with your friends and family? Have you needed a shared on-line file repository for collaborating with co-workers? Are you tired of carrying around a pocket full of thumb drives? Dropbox is all of these and even more. It is cross platform so it runs on Linux, Windows and Mac computers.

After installing the Dropbox application on one machine, you create an account and link that machine to the account. Then, any file that is placed in the My Dropbox folder (which in Windows lives inside the My Documents folder, and in Linux lives in your user folder, the Linux equivalent of My Documents) gets automatically synced with your Dropbox folder on all other linked machines. This is what my Dropbox looks like on my Ubuntu Linux machine:



If you only have Dropbox installed on one machine, it becomes an off-site backup service. Dropbox uses Amazon's S3 service behind the scenes to house your data. So files placed in your Dropbox folder are automatically uploaded to the Dropbox servers. Should you delete them on your local machine or suffer data loss, they can easily be retrieved from the Dropbox servers by installing Dropbox on a replacement machine, or

Smart Computing Tip Of The Day

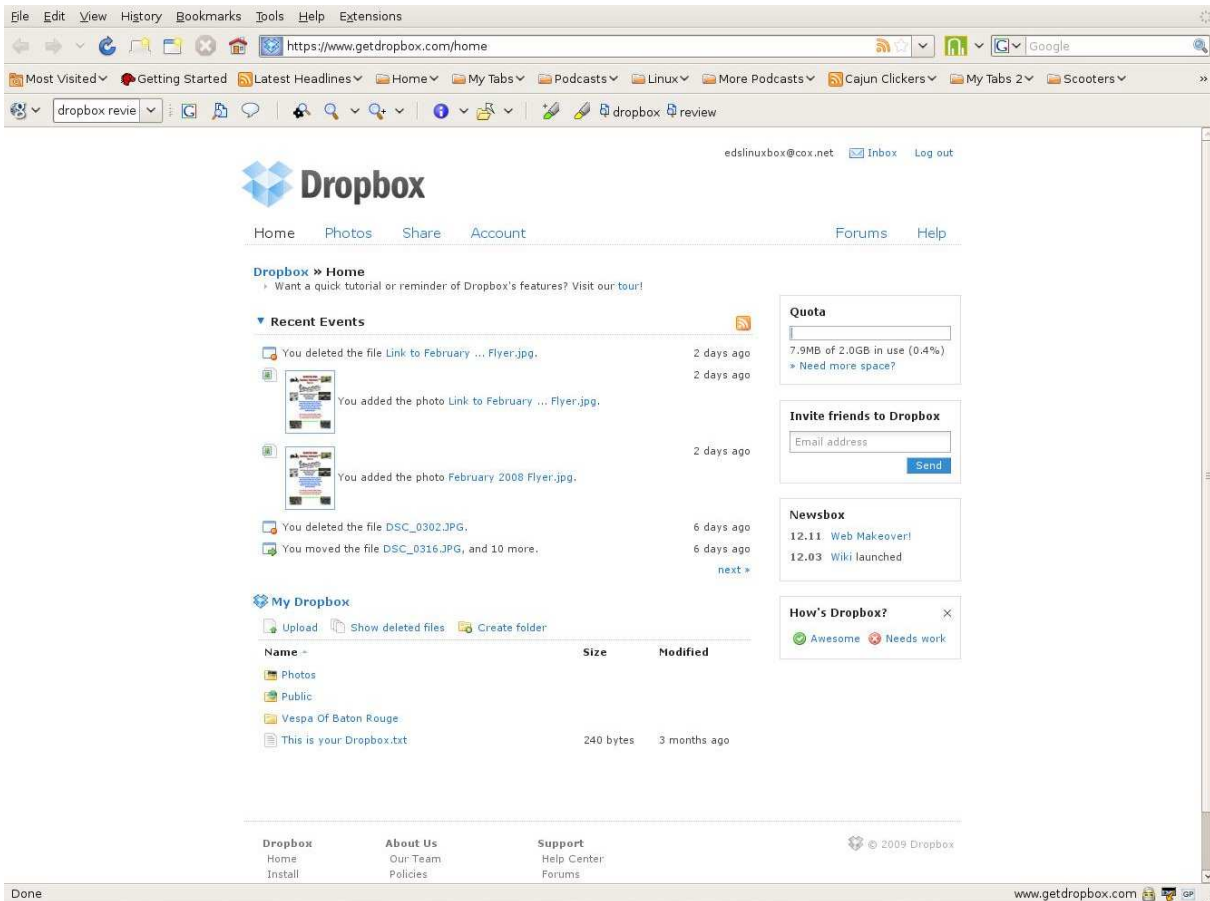
Smart Computing Magazine sends these tips via e mail. They also have them archived on their website:
www.smartcomputing.com

Directly from the Dropbox website.

Dropbox also supports shared folders that allow anyone you invite to the folder to have access to the files in that folder. This is a great way to collaborate and share files with coworkers. There's also a folder specifically configured to hold photos. Any images placed there are automatically turned into a photo album with a publicly accessible URL

you can give out. Go here to see a photo album of pictures in my pictures folder: <http://tinyurl.com/cafvvh>

There is also a Public folder that is accessible to anyone and a web interface that allows you to access files on machines that don't have Dropbox installed. Here's what my Dropbox homepage looks like:



You can also access previous versions of files from the web interface. So if you foul up that file and need to go back to last week's version, you can.

To learn more about Dropbox go to: <https://www.getdropbox.com/screencast#screencast> and watch the video.

Mouse Tip from APCUG

If you're using a wireless optical mouse then get a white or light-colored mouse pad. The mouse's infrared transmitter/receiver uses less power if it's reading a light-colored surface. This will make your batteries last longer.

How To Switch Internet Browsers

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Microsoft's Internet Explorer is a software program that comes on all computers that use the Windows Operating System. Internet Explorer is called an Internet browser since it is the software that allows you to view Web pages and surf the Internet. In fact, at least 80% of you reading this Web page right now are using Internet Explorer. You don't, however, have to use Internet Explorer. There are several other Internet browsers avail-

able.

Due to recent critical security glitches in Internet Explorer, other browsers are looking more attractive. Also, while Internet Explorer has stagnated over the past several years, several other Internet browsers have overtaken it with useful new features and advanced functionality. Features like a tabbed interface that lets you quickly move from page to page and voice-activated menu systems have put alternative browsers like Firefox and Opera ahead of Internet Explorer.

Using an alternative browser is easy. You simply

download the browser from the Web site of the manufacturer and install it on your computer. Firefox, Opera, and Chrome are all alternative browsers that are free downloads. Just follow the Web site instructions to download and install the new browser. During installation the program will see Internet Explorer and will ask you if you want to transfer your Favorites and other information from Internet Explorer to the new program. Most alternative browsers will help you make the switch from Internet Explorer to their browser program. When you install Opera, Netscape, or Firefox you will be given the option importing your Internet information. Opera can import bookmarks and favorites. Firefox allows you to import options, bookmarks, history, passwords, cookies, and other data from Internet Explorer. This works for many different browsers. For example, if you switch from Internet Explorer to Netscape and decide that you would then like to switch to Opera, you can move your information from Internet Explorer to Netscape and then to Opera by simply following the instructions given during installation.

To use a different Internet browser, you don't have to uninstall Internet Explorer. In fact, it is best to leave Internet Explorer on your hard drive. Not only is Internet Explorer difficult to uninstall: you may need to use it in the future. Internet Explorer is the only browser that you can use to access the Windows Update Web site. Also, since it is the most popular Web browser, many Web sites are optimized for Internet Explorer. If you use an alternative Web browser, in your surfing you may find an occasional Web site that does not work properly in the browser that you have chosen. If that is the case, you can simply switch to Internet Explorer to access that Web site and switch back to your alternative browser for your main surfing. You see, there is no problem with using several different browsers. In fact, you can actually use two or three different browsers at the same time with no interference.

When you start using your new browser you will be asked if you want to set the new software as your default Web browser. Whatever browser is set as your default browser will be the browser that will appear when you click on a link in an e-mail or other document. If you want to use your new browser all the time, you will want to set it as the default. If you say no to setting the new program as your default, the program will continue to ask you this question every time you start it. Look for a notice with a check box in front of it to tell the

program that you don't want to see that question again. For instance in Opera you will click to put a checkmark into the box in front of "Do not show this dialog again." In Firefox click to remove the checkmark in the box that says "Always perform this check when starting Firefox." Then the program will not ask that question again.

If you decide that you don't want to continue to use the new browser, you can switch back to Internet Explorer at any time. Any new favorites or cookies that you have added to the new browser can be transferred back to Internet Explorer by using the export and import settings in the two browsers. You simply export the information from the program you are using and import it into the program you want to use. Click on File, and choose Import/Export to use these functions. Most browsers have Wizards that will help you through the entire process. Some programs like Firefox make it easy to import information, but make it more difficult to export information. If a Wizard is not available you can use the programs Help menu for detailed instructions.

If you are used to using Internet Explorer, downloading and using a different Web browser is a big step. Although most alternative browsers are similar to Internet Explorer, you will need to invest some time into learning the new interface. Some features may not be obvious. For instance the tabbed browsing in Firefox is not instantly noticeable. So be sure to read the help files and information on the product's Web site to get the full gist of what features are available.

Smart Computing Tip Of The Day

Take A Snapshot

Have you ever wanted to take a picture of something on your screen, but don't want to shell out cash for a screen-capture utility? You don't have to. Windows has a key that takes a snapshot of your entire Desktop and places it on the clipboard. With the image you want to capture showing on-screen, press the PRINT SCREEN SYST RQ key (the PRINT SCRNSYS RQ key on some keyboards) located at the far right on the top row of keys. Immediately open an image editor (Windows Paint will do) and press CTRL-V or select Paste from the Edit menu to paste it into a file. If you copy anything else after you press the PRINT SCREEN key, however, you will lose the screen shot you just captured.

Note: I am starting a new feature. Each newsletter will include info on an interesting website. Some will come from WorldStart.com, some will come from my internet travels, and I

am hoping some will come from you. Please send me an email on your favorite site or an interesting/unusual site you have discovered. Please copy and paste the URL into the email.



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If you are looking for something free, this is one place you should check. They have:

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Commerce, Marketing, Job Search...

Free Chat Services

Emoticons, ICQ, 3D Chat, VoIP...

E-mail Freebies

E-mail Services, Freeware, Alerts...

Family Freebies

Household Items, Kids' Freebies...

Freebies FAQ

Who, What, Why and Where...

Free Fonts

TrueType, Logos, Dingbats...

Fun Freebies

Entertainment, Pranks, Humor...

Free Games

Online Games, Freeware Games...

Free Graphics

Free Clipart, Image Resources...

Free Image Hosting

Specialized Hosting Services...

Free Internet Access

Web Dial-up Services...

Free Java and JavaScript

Java Applets, JavaScripts, Help...

Mobile Phone Freebies

Free Stuff for Your Cell Phone...

Misc. Freebies

Various Free Stuff Listings...

Newest Freebies

Our Latest Free Stuff Listings...

Other Free Stuff Sites

Freebie Sites Roundup...

Our Freebies Newsletter

Free E-mail Newsletter...

Free Personals Services

Online Dating Services...

Free Postcards

Web Cards, E-Greetings...

Prizes and Contests

Online Giveaways, Sweepstakes...

Free Samples

Cosmetics, Food, Medicine...

Free Screensavers

Freeware, Desktop Programs...

Seasonal Freebies

April Fools' Day, Easter...

Free Software

Utilities, Freeware, Anti-Virus...

Free Sounds

Free MP3s, WAVs, MIDIs...

Free Technical Support

PC Troubleshooting, Reference...

Free Web Space

Free Hosting for Your Site...

Webmaster Freebies

Free Tools, Web Site Resources...